LA

POESIE LYRIQUE EN FRANCE

AU XIXe SIÈCLE

Ouvrages de M. RENÉ DOUMIC, publiés à Paris, et en vente à la

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LA

POÉSIE LYRIQUE

EN FRANCE

AU DIX-NEUVIÈME SIÈCLE

CONFÉRENCES

FAITES À L'UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL, À MONTRÉAL,
LES 12, 13, 14, 15 ET 16 AVRIL 1898

PAR

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1898

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NOTE DES ÉDITEURS

Nous offrons aujourd'hui au public, réunies en volume, les cinq conférences que M. René Doumic, le distingué critique de la *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a faites à l'université Laval, à Montréal, au cours du mois dernier.

Nous ne doutons pas de la faveur que doit assurer à ces pages le mérite d'une judicieuse et fine critique, d'une érudition sûre, d'un style d'une remarquable clarté et d'une rare précision.

Les auditeurs de ces conférences retrouveront, à la lecture, le plaisir qu'ils ont eu à les entendre ; les autres, en le goûtant pour la première fois, regretteront, nous en sommes sûrs, un bonheur manqué et voudront s'en consoler en se procurant les autres volumes de l'éminent critique.

Ces conférences avaient été sténographiées pour un journal de cette ville qui a renoncé, après avoir donné la première, à publier les

autres ; c'est pour suppléer à cette lacune que nous avons entrepris de les publier en volume. N'ayant pu les soumettre à la revision de l'auteur, nous ne saurions les présenter, jusque dans leurs moindres parties, comme l'expression définitive de sa pensée ; mais nous pouvons garantir l'exactitude de la reproduction sténographique dont nous avons corrigé les très rares erreurs, de même que nous avons vérifié sur les textes l'exactitude des citations. Et il ne nous semble pas faire acte de flatterie en émettant l'opinion que la plume du conférencier aurait peu de retouches à faire subir à sa phrase parlée, toujours si correcte et si maîtresse d'elle-même.

LES ÉDITEURS.

Mai 1898.



LA POÉSIE LYRIQUE EN FRANCE

AU XIXe SIÈCLE

Première Conférence.—12 avril 1898.

LAMARTINE.

Excellence,[1] Messeigneurs,[2]
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je veux d'abord vous remercier d'être venus si nombreux et si sympathiques. On vient de me dire qu'ici on aime la France ;[3] je m'en suis aperçu déjà, depuis le peu de temps que je suis au Canada, et ce que je veux essayer de faire, c'est, en vous parlant de nos écrivains, des écri-



LAMARTINE

1—Son Honneur L.-A. Jetté, lieutenant-gouverneur de la province de Québec.

2—NN. SS. Bruchési, archevêque de Montréal, Gravel, évêque de Nicolet, Emard, évêque de Valleyfield, et Larocque, évêque de Sherbrooke.

3—M. le juge Mathieu avait présenté le conférencier à l'auditoire.

vains du XIXe siècle, vous montrer ce qu'il y a, dans cette littérature moderne, de bon, d'intéressant et qui, je le crois, peut faire aimer davantage encore cette France.

J'essaierai donc de vous retracer une histoire de la poésie lyrique en France, au XIXe siècle. Vous comprenez que, étant donné le peu de temps dont je dispose, je serai obligé d'être très bref : je m'en tiendrai aux grands écrivains, je tâcherai de marquer les grands courants.

Vous savez que depuis deux cents ans la France n'avait pas de poésie lyrique : le XVIIe, le XVIIIe siècle, chez nous, ont été admirables pour l'éloquence, pour la philosophie, pour le théâtre, mais n'ont pas eu de poésie lyrique. A la fin du XVIIIe siècle, nous avions, en France, la parodie du lyrisme, la gesticulation lyrique, nous n'avions pas la poésie lyrique. Or, en 1820, et plus exactement, le 13 mars 1820, parut un mince recueil de vers. C'était un modeste volume contenant 116 pages, 24 pièces. C'était l'œuvre d'un inconnu, d'un jeune homme qui n'était même pas de Paris, et qui avait eu toutes les peines du monde à trouver un éditeur. Les éditeurs n'aiment pas beaucoup à publier des vers, parce que les vers, ça ne se vend pas. Mais, songez-y, les vers d'un jeune homme, les vers d'un inconnu, les vers d'un provincial, des vers qui, suivant le mot d'un libraire fameux d'alors et qui ne se doutait pas qu'il allait dire une sottise destinée à devenir fameuse, des vers qui ne ressemblaient aux vers de personne.

Enfin, il trouva un éditeur plus audacieux que les autres, ou peut-être qui avait moins à risquer : il s'appelait Nicole, et ce nom, pour un éditeur de vers, sonnait d'une manière un peu comique ; et il dirigeait une librairie grecque, latine, allemande, ce qui alors devenait tout à fait funambulesque. Ce fut lui qui se décida à publier.

Mesdames et Messieurs, le jeune homme inconnu, c'était Lamartine ; le mince recueil de vers, c'était les *Méditations*. Le 13 mars 1820, c'est la poésie lyrique qui venait de naître en France. On s'en aperçut d'ailleurs immédiatement ; le succès fut rapide, immense, universel.

Quelle est donc cette poésie lyrique française, telle qu'elle se révélait dans les *Méditations ?* Voilà ce que j'essaierai de vous montrer aujourd'hui.

Pour cela, je suivrai une méthode qui sera la même et que j'appliquerai dans toutes ces leçons. Je me demanderai d'abord quelles sont les influences que l'écrivain a subies : influences de la famille, de l'éducation, influences aussi des lectures faites, de la littérature de l'époque : puis, je me demanderai quels sont les événements de la vie qui ont contribué à déterminer l'œuvre du poète ; enfin, qu'est-ce qu'il y avait chez cet écrivain qui lui venait de sa nature même, qui lui appartenait en propre, qui a fait que son œuvre a été la sienne et non pas celle d'un autre. J'aurai ainsi expliqué, par les influences venues du dehors et par la réaction venue du dedans, la production de l'œuvre. Il me restera à montrer ce qu'il y a dans cette œuvre à la fois de noble et de durable et quelle est la place qui lui

appartient dans le développement de notre histoire littéraire.

Lamartine est né le 21 octobre 1790, à Mâcon. Il a passé toute sa première enfance à la campagne, dans le domaine de Milly, dans un domaine qui appartenait à son père. Ce père de Lamartine est un gentilhomme d'ancienne noblesse provinciale, avec tout ce que cela comporte de simplicité de mœurs et de vie patriarcale.

Eh bien, ici déjà nous avons quelques-uns des traits essentiels qui vont contribuer à définir la poésie de Lamartine. Lamartine est né à la campagne. Or, Messieurs, remarquez-le, ceux des écrivains qui ont su peindre les beautés de la nature, qui ont su rendre le charme de la campagne, c'est qu'ils y ont vécu tout enfants. Ainsi un Jean-Jacques Rousseau, élevé au milieu des montagnes de la Suisse ; ainsi un Chateaubriand, élevé sur les grèves de la Bretagne et sous les ombrages mystérieux de son château de Combourg ; ainsi une George Sand, élevée dans ses terres du Berry. Nous autres, gens de Paris, qui ne voyons la campagne que par intervalles, à la campagne nous sommes ce quelque chose de ridicule : un citadin en villégiature. Ce qu'il faut, c'est que les impressions qui nous viennent de la campagne se mêlent avec les impressions délicieuses qu'apporte à l'âme toute neuve l'éveil de la vie. C'est alors que la campagne dépose en nous tous les germes de poésie qui sont en elle.

Lamartine le sait très bien ; il sait ce qu'il doit à la campagne, aux spectacles qui se sont d'abord

déroulés sous ses yeux. Il nous dit qu'il est né au milieu des bergers, au milieu des pasteurs :

Je suis né parmi les pasteurs ;
Enfant, j'aimais comme eux à suivre dans la plaine
Les agneaux, pas à pas, égarés jusqu'au soir,
A revenir, comme eux, baigner leur blanche laine
Dans l'eau courante du lavoir ;
J'aimais à me suspendre aux lianes légères,
A gravir dans les airs, de rameaux en rameaux,
Pour ravir le premier, sous l'aile de leurs mères,
Les tendres œufs des tourtereaux.
J'aimais les voix du soir dans les airs répandues,
Le bruit lointain des chars gémissant sous leur poids,
Et le lourd tintement des cloches suspendues
Au cou des chevreaux dans les bois.

L'impression reçue, elle est au fond du cœur. Plus tard, lorsque Lamartine sera obligé de vivre dans les villes, il s'y sentira toujours comme exilé ; il s'efforcera de rentrer au plus vite à Milly, à Saint-Ouen, et surtout il mettra dans ses vers les souvenirs que lui a laissés la campagne.

Voilà déjà, par conséquent, un premier trait, celui de ce sentiment des beautés de la nature. A ces impressions d'enfance, ajoutez les impressions de la vie de famille. Lamartine a été élevé dans un milieu d'affections féminines qui ont bercé son enfance. Elevé par une mère, par des sœurs très tendres, la maison où a vécu Lamartine, c'est le cadre rêvé à souhait pour une enfance heureuse. Cette maison, voici comment, plus tard, le vieux

Lamartine s'en souvient et la décrit : il se rappelle le temps où

La maison vibrait comme un grand cœur de pierre,
De tous ces cœurs joyeux qui battaient sous ses toits,
A l'heure où la rosée au soleil s'évapore,
Où ses volets fermés s'ouvraient à la chaleur,
Pour y laisser entrer, avec la tiède aurore,
Les nocturnes parfums de nos vignes en fleur.
On eût dit que ses murs respiraient comme un être
Des pampres réjouis la jeune exhalaison ;
La vie apparaissait rose, à chaque fenêtre,
Sous les beaux traits d'enfants nichés dans la maison.

Messieurs, ceci encore est d'une grande importance. On ne saurait attacher trop d'attention à ces impressions qui se sont fait sentir à nos premières années, qui ont façonné notre âme. Tout ce qui ne vient pas de notre nature, nous vient de là. Ceux qui ont eu une enfance pénible et qui ont fait de la vie un rude apprentissage, ne lui pardonneront jamais, ils conservent contre elle une sorte de rancune ; la vie aura beau, plus tard, leur prodiguer ses satisfactions, jamais ils n'oublieront les humiliations et les souffrances des débuts.

Ceux, au contraire, dont l'âme s'est d'abord épanouie librement, ceux-là seront toujours reconnaissants à la vie ; ils auront pour elle une gratitude contre laquelle les épreuves qui viendront peut-être ne prévaudront pas ; ils auront fait dès le début une large provision de douces illusions, de mirages dorés, ils continueront à les projeter sur la vie toute entière.

Tel est le cas de Lamartine. Et de cette enfance qu'il a passée comme je viens de vous le dire, il me semble que se dégage très évidemment certains résultats au point de vue de son œuvre. De là vient d'abord sa tendresse. Vous savez qu'on a prétendu que l'on pouvait classer les écrivains entre ceux qui ont été élevés par des femmes et ceux qui n'ont pas reçu l'éducation féminine. Les premiers seraient seuls capables de connaître tout ce qu'il y a de délicat dans la sensibilité. Eh bien, ce procédé de classement-là est un peu périlleux. Car Racine, qui s'y connaissait en fait de sentiments et de passions, n'a jamais connu sa mère. Il n'en reste pas moins vrai que les mains de femmes ont pour former un jeune homme des délicatesses que les autres n'ont pas. Ceux qui ont été élevés par des femmes, se reconnaissent à quelque chose de plus fin, de plus naturellement distingué qui est en eux.

Ce quelque chose de féminin, on l'a toujours noté chez Lamartine, et je pense bien qu'il lui vient de son éducation première. De là vient aussi à Lamartine son christianisme et l'espèce particulière de ce christianisme. En effet, la foi, chez Lamartine, n'est pas le résultat d'un effort volontaire, ce n'est pas le résultat d'un raisonnement; la foi, chez lui, jaillit d'une façon spontanée; cette foi, il l'a trouvée autour de lui au foyer paternel, elle a été dans l'atmosphère qu'il a toujours respirée; le christianisme lui est apparu à travers toutes ces affections familiales, à travers toutes ces douces choses dont il aimait à se souvenir. Et de là vient le caractère

de ce christianisme chez Lamartine, un christianisme confiant et heureux.

On remit l'éducation de Lamartine à un prêtre, l'abbé Dumont, prêtre qui avait passé par la révolution, qui avait vécu dans le siècle, dont l'imagination était fort aventureuse. Ce prêtre, c'est celui dont Lamartine s'est souvenu, quand il a, plus tard, écrit son *Jocelyn*. Et de la vie avec l'abbé Dumont, je pense bien qu'il est venu à Lamartine quelque chose du tour romanesque qu'on trouvera dans son imagination.

Cependant, on voulut mettre l'enfant, déjà grandi, au collège. Lamartine ne put supporter la discipline et la régularité du collège. On le mit alors au petit séminaire de Belley; il n'y apprit pas non plus grand'chose. A seize ans, il avait terminé ses études, je veux dire qu'il ne savait rien. Il revint alors dans le domaine paternel, et nous allons le voir pendant plusieurs années mener tout à fait la vie d'un gentilhomme campagnard. Il part dès l'aube, siffle son chien, s'en va droit devant lui, s'arrête, aux heures chaudes du jour, sous les arbres au large feuillage et tire de sa poche, tantôt un album sur lequel il crayonne quelques vers, tantôt les livres qui sont ses livres favoris.

Nous pouvons très facilement faire la liste de ces livres et voir quelles sont les lectures qui ont influé sur Lamartine. Lamartine a d'abord beaucoup lu la Bible; il en a tiré le grand caractère, l'allure épique, les tableaux champêtres. Il a lu Ossian.

Vous connaissez cette fameuse supercherie. Mac-Pherson, à la fin du XVIIIe siècle, s'avisa d'écrire

des poésies d'un caractère très primitif et les donna, sous le nom d'Ossian, comme étant d'un barde du VIe siècle. Tout le monde accepta la supercherie, et on lut Ossian avec la conviction qu'on était en présence de quelque chose de sauvage.

Mais, d'ailleurs, peu importe : Lamartine aima les poésies d'Ossian, d'abord parce qu'elles l'aidaient à se débarrasser de la mythologie des Grecs et des Latins ; puis, il aima les poésies d'Ossian à cause de leur tristesse, à cause du paysage où l'auteur place ses personnages, du paysage de rêve, où les fantômes des êtres que nous avons aimés, aiment, passent, où une lumière vague se répand sur les brouillards, sur les bruyères.

Lamartine a lu Jean-Jacques Rousseau ; il lui a emprunté sa théorie de la beauté de la nature. Il a lu Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, et il a suivi sous les cocotiers de l'île Bourbon ces deux enfants, Paul et Virginie, qu'embrasent un amour pur et ardent. Surtout il a beaucoup lu Chateaubriand. Chateaubriand a été pour lui le grand initiateur ; il a pris de Chateaubriand les tristesses vagues, il en a pris ce dégoût des hommes qui se console dans la solitude. Il a aimé Chateaubriand, surtout pour la cadence de ses phrases, pour le rythme, pour ces mots si merveilleusement choisis et qui éveillent dans l'âme on ne sait quelle lointaine et profonde sonorité. Enfin, Lamartine a beaucoup lu Platon, dont l'idéalisme le séduit, et il a emprunté à Pétrarque sa conception de l'amour.

Vous savez en quoi consiste cette conception de l'amour, dans les sonnets de Pétrarque. Elle con-

siste à mêler au sentiment de l'affection celui du respect, de l'enthousiasme, à en faire une sorte de culte.

Voilà comment se forment, grâce à toutes sortes d'influences, grâce à des lectures faites en tous sens, voilà comment se forment, chez Lamartine, les éléments et comme la matière de la poésie. Nous allons voir comment deux événements surtout ont aidé cette matière de poésie à prendre forme, à faire jaillir l'œuvre que va faire Lamartine.

Le premier de ces événements, c'est un voyage que le jeune homme fit en Italie, vers 1812. L'Italie, en ce temps-là, n'était pas ce qu'elle est devenue depuis, grâce à la facilité déplorable des communications ; les endroits les plus beaux n'avaient pas été dépoétisés et banalisés par une admiration de commande ; les points de vue les plus pittoresques n'avaient pas été gâtés par l'industrie des hôteliers, et enfin il n'y avait pas de funiculaire pour monter sur les volcans. Cette belle nature avait conservé toute sa saveur, et l'âme du poète en fut d'autant plus émue, qu'il y avait une sorte d'accord entre la sensibilité même de Lamartine et le caractère de la nature italienne. Cette terre italienne, cette nature d'Italie, avec la douceur de son atmosphère, avec sa transparence, avec ce bleu de ciel qui se mêle au bleu de la mer, c'est une terre de volupté ; quelque chose s'en dégage, qui détend les ressorts de l'énergie ; il y a de la douceur, il y a de la mollesse dans l'air ; on se laisse aller, on ne veut plus que goûter la douceur de vivre.

Lamartine connut à Naples une jeune fille née chez des pêcheurs de l'île de Procida : c'est Graziella. Il se laissa aimer par elle. Ce fut une idylle en pleine nature, et Graziella, c'est pour Lamartine à peu près ce que Mignon est pour Goethe ; c'est comme une personnification de l'Italie ; on dirait l'image idéale de ces cités italiennes qui trempent leurs pieds dans la mer, qui secouent au vent leurs chansons et, dans l'atmosphère, leur chevelure embaumée, livrant ses parfums à la tiédeur d'un air bienveillant.

Lamartine avait-il aimé ? Il serait plus juste de dire qu'il s'est laissé aimer. Mais, d'ailleurs, soyez tranquilles, son heure va venir. Lamartine avait été envoyé en 1816, fort malade, aux eaux d'Aix, en Savoie. Il connut là une jeune femme, déjà touchée par la mort et qui était comme la personnification de la poésie spiritualiste. Mesdames et Messieurs, il y a des femmes qui semblent n'avoir emprunté à la matière que juste ce dont une âme a besoin d'enveloppe pour se mouvoir parmi nous. Julie était de ces femmes-là. Le jeune homme enthousiaste et la jeune femme se sentirent attirés l'un vers l'autre. Julie était mariée à un vieillard, le physicien Charles. Lorsque Lamartine la revit pendant l'hiver, dans le salon de son mari, il s'aperçut que, dans ce milieu scientifique, où se continuait la tradition de l'incrédulité du XVIIIe siècle, Julie avait perdu la foi. Mais est-ce qu'on peut s'aimer, quand il y a une divergence aussi grande que celle de la croyance ? Cela n'est pas possible ; et aussi,

peu à peu, Julie revenait-elle à la foi de celui qui l'attirait.

A l'automne suivant, Lamartine revint au lac où il attendait celle qu'il y avait vue l'année d'avant. Elle ne revint pas. Il apprit peu de temps après qu'elle était morte, en baisant ce crucifix qu'il lui avait appris à aimer.

Désormais, chez Lamartine, le poète est formé.

as voyez ce que Lamartine doit à l'éducation. A sa vie à la campagne il doit le sentiment des choses de la nature ; à son éducation de famille il doit sa tendresse et son christianisme ; à ses lectures il doit quelques-unes de ses idées ; enfin, deux événements, ce voyage en Italie, ses rapports avec Julie qui vient de mourir, ont aidé chez lui la poésie à se former complètement. Il nous reste à nous demander comment Lamartine, par une disposition spéciale de son esprit, a pu imprimer à certains sentiments un caractère qui lui est propre ; il nous reste à nous demander quel est, chez Lamartine, le tour d'esprit qui lui appartient à lui et à aucun autre.

Ce tour d'esprit, chez Lamartine, faute d'un mot juste, je l'appellerai optimisme. Par optimisme, vous pensez bien que je n'entends pas parler d'une conception philosophique ; non. Mais il y a des gens qui ont cette faculté de ne voir en toute chose que ce qui est noble et ce qui est grand, l'aspect de la beauté et non pas celui de la laideur, le bien et non pas le mal, la lumière et non pas l'ombre. Lamartine est de ceux-là.

Lamartine a quelque part défini le poète, tel qu'il le comprend ; il s'adresse à lord Byron, et il lui dit :

Viens reprendre ton rang dans ta splendeur première,
Parmi ces purs enfants de gloire et de lumière,
Que d'un souffle choisi Dieu voulut animer
Et qu'il fit pour chanter, pour croire et pour aimer.

Eh bien, ces purs enfants de gloire et de lumière, ce sont les poètes, parmi lesquels Lamartine a sa place ; il est un de ceux, en effet, qui n'ont que des visions glorieuses et lumineuses. Voilà ce que j'entends par l'optimisme foncier de Lamartine. Vous allez voir comment cet optimisme lui a permis de renouveler les sentiments et les idées qui forment les thèmes essentiels de la poésie lyrique. Ces thèmes de la poésie lyrique,— nous ne prenons que les plus importants, — furent l'amour, l'idée de la mort, le sentiment de la nature, le sentiment de Dieu.

L'amour, vous savez ce qu'il était devenu pour les gens du XVIIIe siècle : ce n'était que la fantaisie passagère. Mais pour Lamartine, c'est justement le contraire ; pour Lamartine, l'amour est un sentiment dans lequel il doit entrer quelque chose d'infini ; car tout passe, les êtres et les choses disparaissent ; mais rien ne saurait briser le lien par lequel deux âmes qui se sont retrouvées se sont unies. La mort peut enlever celle qui, transfigurée par la poésie, s'appellera Elvire ; mais Elvire n'en apparaîtra que plus radieuse aux yeux du poète. Et l'amour est justement cela ; il est un effort contre

toutes les puissances de destruction, il est une sorte de prise victorieuse sur l'infini.

L'idée de la mort, Mesdames et Messieurs, je n'ai pas besoin d'insister pour vous dire quelle en est l'importance. Aussi bien, dans la littérature et dans la conduite même de notre vie, la mort, on en retrouve partout l'idée. La religion ne cesse de nous y rappeler. La mort, c'est elle qui est l'ouvrière des philosophies, de la morale, puisque toutes les doctrines humaines n'ont été inventées que pour nous préparer au grand passage. C'est elle qui est l'ouvrière de la beauté, elle à qu nous devons les jouissances mêmes de cette vie ; car ces jouissances, si nous nous y attachons avec tant d'âpreté, c'est parce que nous savons qu'elles sont brèves et qu'elles vont nous échapper. Et, en littérature, vous savez qu'il n'y a pas un grand livre d'où cette idée de la mort soit absente. Chez nous, en France, la poésie est née le jour où François Villon, dans sa ballade des *Dames du temps jadis*, s'est mis en présence de cette loi universelle et inéluctable de la mort. C'est Malherbequi rappelle ensuite que "la mort a des rigueurs à nulle autre pareilles." Dans l'œuvre de Bossuet, dans l'œuvre de Pascal, l'idée de la mort est toujours présente. Et nous-mêmes, de la façon dont nous concevons la mort, dépend la façon dont nous vivons chaque jour : car, pensons-nous que le jour de la mort est vraiment la fin de tout, mais alors, réjouissons-nous, hâtons-nous de jouir et, pareils aux sages épicuriens, couronnons-nous de roses. Ou, au contraire, pensons-nous que le dernier jour de cette vie mortelle est le commencement d'une autre

vie, alors, c'est cette autre vie qui importe et c'est dans cette autre vie qu'il faut mériter le bonheur. Avons-nous peur de la mort, alors, nous ne pourrons goûter ici-bas aucune jouissance, toutes nos joies seront empoisonnées, c'est une ombre qui s'étendra sur notre vie tout entière. Ou, au contraire, est-ce que nous envisageons sans crainte l'idée de la mort, mais, alors, aucune épreuve ne sera pour nous véritablement pénible, car nous savons bien qu'un jour viendra, il viendra sûrement où cette épreuve sera terminée, où toutes les souffrances de notre chair meurtrie, où toutes les tortures de notre âme déçue, s'apaiseront dans ce grand sommeil que dorment les morts.

L'image de la mort plane sur les *Méditations ;* mais c'est une image qui n'est ni lugubre ni sombre. Voici comment Lamartine salue cette mort dans laquelle il voit une délivrance :

Je te salue, ô mort, libérateur céleste :
Tu ne m'apparais point sous cet aspect funeste
Que t'ont prêté longtemps l'épouvante et l'erreur ;
Ton bras n'est point armé d'un glaive destructeur.
Ton front n'est point cruel, ton œil n'est point perfide ;
Au secours des douleurs un Dieu clément te guide,
Tu n'anéantis pas, tu délivres..................

Derrière la mort, ce que Lamartine apercevait d'abord, c'était la fidélité du souvenir ; et derrière la mort, ce que Lamartine apercevait encore, c'était l'immortalité radieuse.

Le sentiment de la nature. Messieurs, nous faisons partie d'un vaste ensemble de création. Y a-t-il des rapports entre cet univers qui nous entoure et

nous, ou bien sommes-nous seuls au milieu de la nature ? Vous savez qu'au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle on pensait que, entre la nature et nous, il n'y a pas de correspondance. Nous sommes aujourd'hui de l'avis justement opposé ; nous pensons que la nature n'est pas insensible, qu'elle n'est pas indifférente ; nous le pensons, nous faisons mieux que de le penser : cette opinion est devenue chez nous une sorte d'instinct. Il y a des jours où nous nous éveillons et nous sentons que nous sommes gais, sans qu'il y ait pour cela de raison ; mais il fait beau, l'air est léger et la gaieté des choses est entrée en nous-mêmes. Il y a des jours où nous sommes tristes, et alors, si le ciel est sombre, si le vent souffle, si le temps est pluvieux, si la nature a un aspect misérable et comme en deuil, il nous semble que cette tristesse des choses s'est mise à l'unisson de notre tristesse intérieure. Ou si, au contraire, alors que nous avons l'âme en détresse, le ciel est radieux et le soleil brillant, il nous semble que toute cette gaieté extérieure insulte à la tristesse de notre âme.

Eh bien, cette nature à laquelle nous prêtons des sentiments presque humains, les uns ont conçu contre elle une sorte de haine violente, d'autres, au contraire, considèrent que la nature est pour nous une amie, une mère, une consolatrice. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire parmi lesquels se range Lamartine ; Lamartine nous dira :

Mais la nature est là qui t'invite et qui t'aime,
Plonge-toi dans son sein qu'elle t'ouvre toujours ;
Quand tout change, pour toi la nature est la même
Et le même soleil se lève sur tes jours.

D'où vient que Lamartine ait tellement de confiance dans cette bonté de la nature ? C'est que, derrière la création, ce qu'il aperçoit sans cesse, c'est le Créateur ; de ce qui est relatif, passager et changeant, il s'élève à l'Etre souverain, absolu ; la nature lui apparaît comme une sorte de temple où se fait le sacrifice en l'honneur du Créateur ; la nature, il la voit toujours adorant et remerciant Dieu.

Voici comment il nous décrit, à la fin du jour, cet aspect de la nature, considérée comme un temple, en train de célébrer le culte divin :

Comme une lampe d'or dans l'azur suspendue,
La lune se balance au bord de l'horizon ;
Ses rayons affaiblis dorment sur le gazon,
Et le voile des nuits sur les monts se déplie.
C'est l'heure où la nature, un moment recueillie,
Entre la nuit qui tombe et le jour qui s'enfuit,
S'élève au Créateur du jour et de la nuit,
Et semble offrir à Dieu, dans son brillant langage,
De la création le magnifique hommage.
Voilà le sacrifice immense, universel !
L'univers est le temple, et la terre est l'autel.

Personne, parmi nos poètes, n'a poussé plus loin que Lamartine cette faculté qui consiste à retrouver Dieu partout ; la nature devient pour lui transparente : c'est Dieu qu'il y retrouve sans cesse :

Ce monde qui te cache est transparent pour moi ;
C'est toi que je découvre au fond de la nature,
C'est toi que je bénis dans toute créature.

Car ce Dieu de bonté, Lamartine sait très bien quelles sont les objections qu'on peut faire contre la

bonté de Dieu. Pourquoi est-ce que Dieu nous a imposé la souffrance ? pourquoi est-ce que Dieu nous permet le péché ? Nous ne le savons pas. Mais qu'est-ce que cela prouve ? Cela prouve la faiblesse de notre intelligence, cela ne prouve pas contre la bonté de Dieu. Nous ne voyons les choses qu'à notre point de vue humain, c'est-à-dire que nous ne voyons qu'une partie ; il faudrait voir l'ensemble. Quand on voit les choses d'ensemble, on s'aperçoit que tout est bien, que tout est bon, que tout est grand, à sa place.

Voilà comment Lamartine, en apportant en toute chose cet optimisme dont je vous parlais, a pu élargir, transformer les sentiments que, jusque-là, célébraient les poètes et rendre, pour ainsi dire, à la poésie lyrique ces thèmes qui étaient desséchés et taris avant lui.

Si j'en avais le temps, je ferais avec vous une étude sur les images et sur le style de Lamartine ; je vous montrerais comment Lamartine a toujours emprunté ses images à ce qu'il y a de plus pur et de plus léger, ce qui vole, ce qui est aérien, ce qui est fluide ; et de même pour son style, je vous montrerais que les mots dont se sert Lamartine, ce sont les mots dans lesquels il y a le moins de matière. Une idée, un sentiment, quand on veut les exprimer par un mot, ce mot, nécessairement, les altère et les déforme ; une idée se rétrécit, un sentiment se fige, pour entrer dans le cadre étroit du mot ; et c'est pour cela que les poètes, la plupart du temps, nous disent, une fois que leurs vers sont écrits, qu'ils ne les

reconnaissent plus : c'est autre chose qu'ils avaient dans l'imagination.

Eh bien, Lamartine, au lieu d'employer des mots qui peignent, des termes précis, emploie ceux dont le contour reste toujours un peu indécis ; ainsi, dans ses vers on retrouve la poésie, telle qu'elle jaillit de l'âme, et je crois bien que chez nous, en France, si, en effet, on voulait savoir où est la poésie, c'est dans les *Méditations* de Lamartine qu'il faudrait aller la chercher. D'autres poètes ont une poésie plus pittoresque, une poésie plus éloquente, mais chez Lamartine, il y a la poésie, et Lamartine, c'est le poète.

Dans son œuvre, rien qui sente l'effort volontaire le travail ; sa poésie est spontanée, jaillissante. Lamartine a été poète, sans avoir appris à écrire, sans avoir fait, pour ainsi dire, l'apprentissage de son métier. Il nous l'a dit, la poésie c'est, pour lui, une fonction naturelle :

> Je chantais, mes amis, comme l'homme respire,
> Comme l'oiseau gémit, comme le vent soupire,
> Comme l'eau murmure en coulant....

Il chantait, et il est le seul, en effet, pour qui l'on puisse employer cette expression métaphorique ; car nous savons bien, dans notre siècle de prose, qu'un poète ne chante pas. Un poète, c'est un monsieur qui est dans son cabinet de travail, qui met du noir sur du blanc, qui écrit des lignes et qui fait des ratures. De même, nous savons très bien qu'un poète n'a pas de lyre. Le reporter le plus indiscret, s'il allait chez un poète, ne lui

demanderait pas de lui montrer sa lyre. Lamartine est le seul dont on puisse dire sans ridicule qu'il a porté une lyre.

Lamartine représente pour nous le type lui-même du poète inspiré et, si on voulait faire le portrait du poète, il semble bien qu'on le ferait à sa ressemblance. Il est beau, il a cette beauté du visage dans laquelle nous aimons à voir un reflet de la beauté de l'âme. Il traverse la vie sans rien connaître de ses mesquineries. Etranger à toutes les préoccupations de calcul et d'intérêt, il dépense sans compter, sans s'apercevoir qu'il ouvre sous ses pas le gouffre de la ruine. Il a besoin de s'entourer d'un décor brillant. Il voyage en Orient, il a frété un vaisseau à ses frais, et les populations de là-bas, éblouies, en le voyant passer, disent que c'est le grand pacha de France.

De même, il traverse la littérature, il renouvelle la poésie lyrique et il passe. Poésie, philosophie, roman, histoire, il touche tout de son génie, sans s'y poser davantage ; il montre la voie d'un geste large et dédaigne de se faire chef d'école. De même, en politique, il ne voudra pas être chef de parti. Quand il entre au Parlement, on lui demande : "Où siègerez-vous ? " Et il répond : " Au plafond." Et c'est juste, il a siégé au plafond : c'est-à-dire qu'il a plané au-dessus de toutes les médiocres compétitions. Puis il a été, en 1849, le maître du gouvernement ; il a calmé l'émeute, il a parlé noblement à l'Europe, au monde.

Il a tout d'un coup cessé d'être le premier personnage de son pays, il est rentré dans l'ombre ; les

années sont devenues douloureuses ; la misère, une noire misère, a assiégé les dernières années du poète ; mais cette pauvreté, qui a attristé la fin du glorieux vieillard, n'a pas diminué le prestige de son nom ; peut-être, au contraire, y a-t-elle ajouté je ne sais quoi de plus noble et de plus beau. Vous savez que nous aimons que la tristesse, que la douleur consacre ici-bas toute chose.

Et enfin, Lamartine a été, autant qu'on peut l'être, un homme réalisant l'idée complète que nous pouvons nous faire d'un homme de génie ; il a été homme de pensée et il a été homme d'action ; il a été conducteur de peuple, il a été orateur, il a été poète avec une facilité merveilleuse ; et si l'on veut chercher dans notre XIXe siècle, c'est Lamartine, et ce n'en est pas un autre, qui a été vraiment chez nous le poète comparable à l'aède primitif, celui qui fait, dans notre XIXe siècle, figure de héros.



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Deuxième Conférence.—13 avril 1898.

VICTOR HUGO.

Excellence, Messeigneurs,
Mesdames, Messieurs,

HIER, je vous montrais que, chez Lamartine, la poésie jaillit de l'intérieur. La poésie de Lamartine, c'est l'effusion d'une belle âme qui se répand au dehors et qui, sous la forme qu'elle s'est choisie, conserve son essence immatérielle.



VICTOR HUGO

Eh bien, prenez le contraire de cette définition, et vous aurez assez justement une idée de ce que c'est que la poésie, chez Victor Hugo. Chez Victor Hugo, par un mouvement en sens contraire, la poésie vient de l'extérieur et se répercute dans l'âme du poète. L'âme du poète est un miroir, c'est un écho. C'est Victor Hugo lui-même qui nous fournit cette comparaison qui est en même temps la meilleure explication de la production poétique, telle qu'elle se passe chez lui. Dans une pièce

fameuse des *Feuilles d'automne*, Victor Hugo définit ainsi la manière dont, chez lui, se produit ce phénomène de la production poétique :

> Tout souffle, tout rayon, ou propice ou fatal,
> Fait reluire et vibrer mon âme de cristal,
> Mon âme aux mille voix, que le Dieu que j'adore
> Mit au centre de tout comme un écho sonore.

C'est cela même. L'âme de Victor Hugo est un écho, et Victor Hugo a eu l'ambition d'être l'écho universel, de répercuter toutes les voix : toutes les voix du siècle, toutes les voix de la nature, toutes les voix de l'humanité.

Mesdames et Messieurs, toutes les voix, cela fait beaucoup de voix, et vous devinez que Victor Hugo n'a pu réaliser qu'une partie de son ambition. Je voudrais justement vous montrer comment, chez Victor Hugo, le tempérament, l'éducation, le milieu où il a vécu, ont déterminé le choix des thèmes poétiques. Puis, nous passerons en revue ces différents thèmes poétiques, et enfin, nous nous demanderons comment Victor Hugo les a mis en œuvre, par conséquent, quelle est la forme particulière, quelle est la sonorité propre de son âme, ce qui fait que sa poésie, comme pour Lamartine, est à lui et non pas à un autre.

Comme pour Lamartine, je ne retiens de Victor Hugo que les faits essentiels de sa biographie, ceux qui ont influé sur son œuvre.

Victor Hugo est né en 1802 :

> Ce siècle avait deux ans...

Il était le fils d'un général de l'empire, le général comte Léopold-Sigisbert Hugo.

Si vous ouvrez la biographie que Victor Hugo a écrite de lui-même, *Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie*, vous y lirez que la famille Hugo remonte jusqu'au XVIe siècle. Il y avait un Hugo, capitaine aux gardes, puis : il y a eu toute une série de gentilshommes, des comtes, des marquis, des évêques, une chanoinesse de Remiremont ; et ça fait une très noble généalogie. Mais pour connaître la généalogie, même des poètes, nous avons d'autres moyens de renseignements que leur témoignage, et cela s'appelle les registres des mairies ou ceux des paroisses. Et, si on consulte ces registres, on trouve que le grand-père de Victor Hugo était serrurier et que son arrière-grand-père était cultivateur. Il y a bien eu une famille Hugo qui remonte au XVIe siècle, où il y a eu des évêques, une chanoinesse, des gentilshommes, des comtes et des marquis : seulement, ce n'est pas la même famille.

Si je relève ce trait, ce n'est pas pour faire au poète un reproche de vanité, mais c'est parce qu'il est essentiel de noter chez lui l'origine plébéienne. Victor Hugo est tout près du peuple par sa naissance, et cela explique chez lui bien des choses. De là vient, d'abord, cette vigueur de sa constitution physique, où l'on sent les richesses d'un sang jeune et les ressources inépuisables d'une nature intacte. Victor Hugo a vécu jusqu'à une vieillesse très avancée, et, quand la mort est venue le prendre, il a fallu qu'elle engageât contre

lui une sorte de duel géant qui a duré huit jours. Pendant toute sa vie, Victor Hugo a écrit ; quand il est mort, il a continué d'écrire. Vous savez que, depuis la mort de Victor Hugo, il n'a pas cessé de paraître à peu près deux volumes de Victor Hugo par an. Victor Hugo s'était accoutumé à publier ses deux volumes ; la mort est survenue, et ça été un accident négligeable. Il n'est rien comme d'avoir pris de fortes habitudes. Victor Hugo, c'est l'ouvrier qui se met, dès l'aube, à sa tâche, en chantant et qui la poursuit jusqu'à la fin du jour.

De là vient encore cette violence, cette âpreté dans la colère, qui, à de certains jours, sera un des éléments de l'inspiration du poète. Pour comprendre que Victor Hugo ait pu devenir le furieux insulteur qu'il est dans *les Châtiments*, il faut se le représenter à la manière de ces gens du peuple qui, quand ils sont possédés par la colère, ne savent plus comment s'arrêter, ne peuvent plus se maîtriser et qui subissent la colère comme on subit un accès de folie.

Et de là vient encore, chez Victor Hugo, cette santé intellectuelle qu'il a conservée jusqu'au bout. Chez Victor Hugo, vous ne trouverez rien de maladif, rien de morbide. Il n'a pas même été effleuré par ce que l'on a appelé le mal du siècle, par cette maladie du découragement. Lui, au contraire, il croit à la bonté de la nature, au progrès de l'humanité, à la vertu de l'action. Par une conséquence naturelle et par une juste rançon, Victor Hugo a les défauts de ses qualités. Il

manque de certaines délicatesses, il manque un peu de sensibilité véritable, de tact, de goût, et tout cela concorde. Par cette vigueur, par cette âpreté, par cette rudesse, Victor Hugo est bien près du peuple, il est bien de souche plébéienne.

Puis, Victor Hugo, tout enfant, suit son père en Italie, en Espagne, lorsque le général Hugo y est nommé gouverneur. C'est une éducation tout à fait décousue, menée au hasard, laissée à l'aventure, aux circonstances. C'est le contraire d'une de ces éducations réglées, tranquilles et qui préparent à la vie intérieure. Au contraire, l'éducation que reçoit Victor Hugo, c'est l'éducation d'une enfance errante, promenée à travers l'Europe, dans la clameur des batailles, dans un décor changeant sur lequel les yeux de l'enfant se promènent, étonnés et curieux. C'est justement une enfance faite pour détourner l'esprit de l'intérieur et le reporter vers l'attention des choses extérieures. En se promenant ainsi à travers toute l'Europe du midi, l'Italie, l'Espagne, l'enfant déjà s'emplit l'esprit de belles images, de couleurs, de choses pittoresques ; lorsqu'il revient ensuite à Paris, il a fait provision de belles images, de belles visions.

Je revins, rapportant de mes courses lointaines
Comme un vague faisceau de lueurs incertaines.
....
L'Espagne me montrait ses couvents, ses bastilles ;
Burgos, sa cathédrale aux gothiques aiguilles ;
Irun, ses toits de bois ; Vittoria, ses tours,
Et toi, Valladolid, tes palais de familles,
Fiers de laisser rouiller des chaînes dans leurs cours.
....
Mes souvenirs germaient dans mon âme échauffée...

Et, en effet, ce qu'il fallait maintenant, c'est que ces souvenirs vinssent à germer, c'est que ces faisceaux de lueurs encore vagues vinssent à se renforcer, de façon, plus tard, à illuminer toute l'âme et toute l'œuvre du poète. C'est dire qu'il fallait que cette enfance errante vînt à se fixer ; qu'il fallait que cette enfance voyageuse vînt à rêver. Pour cela, il était besoin de calme et de solitude. Victor Hugo va les trouver dans ce jardin des Feuillantines, un jardin de couvent abandonné, où s'était établie la famille Hugo ; jardin plein de vieux arbres, de jeunes fleurs, auxquels le poète est resté plus tard toujours reconnaissant, et auxquels l'enfant était d'autant plus attaché qu'il craignait sans cesse qu'on vînt l'arracher à ce jardin.

Le jardin était grand, profond, mystérieux,
Fermé par de hauts murs aux regards curieux,
Semé de fleurs s'ouvrant ainsi que les paupières,
Et d'insectes vermeils qui couraient sur les pierres,
Plein de bourdonnements et de confuses voix ;
Au milieu, presque un champ ; dans le fond, presque un [bois...

....

...tout ce beau jardin, radieux paradis,
Tous ces vieux murs croulants, toutes ces jeunes roses,
Tous ces objets pensifs, toutes ces douces choses,
Parlèrent à ma mère, avec l'onde et le vent,
Et lui dirent tout bas : Laisse-nous cet enfant.

Ce jardin des Feuillantines, le séjour que Victor Hugo y a fait, ça été justement la période d'incubation pendant laquelle les images qu'il avait rapportées de ses courses à travers l'Espagne et l'Italie ont pu devenir chez lui des éléments d'art.

Victor Hugo passe quelque temps au collège ; il y fait des mathématiques, il y fait des vers ; il publie ses premiers romans, ses premières odes, et il se marie... Il fait un mariage comme en faisaient les jeunes gens de ce temps-là, un mariage d'inclination. Il épouse une jeune fille qu'il aime, mademoiselle Adèle Fouché.

Le voici marié, père de famille, et il devient, et il ne cessera plus d'être le type du bourgeois, tel qu'il était en 1830, et tel, je crois, qu'il est resté en 1898.

Il faut donc que je vous fasse le portrait du bourgeois français. Le bourgeois de chez nous est un homme d'ordre, de mœurs régulières ; rangé, méthodique, qui a le souci de ses intérêts, de son bon renom et de sa situation sociale. Il fait dans sa vie peu de place au rêve, et généralement à tout ce qui est inutile. Pour ce qui est de la passion, dont les orages sont troublants et dont les jouissances mêmes sont douloureuses, il s'arrange pour l'ignorer. L'amour est chez lui une petite fièvre, vite calmée. Cet amour se change très vite en une affection tranquille et reconnaissante pour celle qui est la gardienne de son foyer. Notre bourgeois a un attachement solide pour sa femme. Je ne dis pas qu'il n'ait jamais de torts envers elle ; mais cela ne prouve pas du tout qu'il ait cessé de l'aimer. Mais ceux qu'il aime surtout, ce sont ses enfants. Les enfants, ce sont eux qui remplissent le cœur du père aussi bien que celui de la mère : ces enfants, pour qui nous avons tant de sollicitude inquiète, tant de tendresse protectrice,

et par qui nous souffrons tant, ces enfants qui, même quand ils ont grandi, même quand ils sont partis, même quand ils nous ont oubliés, restent pour nous toujours "les petits."

Le bourgeois de chez nous est badaud, et il est bavard ; il faut qu'il lise son journal chaque matin et qu'il recommence chaque soir ; il est curieux de toutes sortes de choses qui cependant ne l'intéressent que de fort loin, comme la politique de l'Extrême-Orient ou l'opinion des danseuses sur l'immortalité de l'âme. La politique surtout est pour lui une matière à dissertations abondantes. Il est libéral en paroles et du bout des lèvres, et la liberté est un mot avec lequel on peut, à certains jours, le mener très loin. D'ailleurs, par tempérament et par suite d'une longue hérédité, il est monarchique. Il est patriote, et son patriotisme a volontiers cette exaltation et cette intransigeance infiniment respectables qui en font le chauvinisme. C'est pourquoi, sans être lui-même un très grand guerrier, il aime les récits et les spectacles militaires ; il aime à voir passer les soldats dans les rues, à voir défiler des bataillons, musique en tête, et caracoler des généraux qui ont un beau cheval et un panache. Il n'est pas très religieux, en ce sens que la religion n'est pas pour lui ce sentiment qui imprègne l'être tout entier ; mais il tient à l'existence d'un Dieu, qu'il considère comme une sorte de policier céleste, dont la fonction principale est de récompenser dans l'autre vie ceux qui ont été sur cette terre de braves hommes de bourgeois.

Il n'est pas mystique, pas mystique pour un sou ; il n'est pas métaphysicien, et généralement il trouve que les spéculations abstraites sont des rêveries de songe-creux. En revanche, il a beaucoup de goût pour la morale, pour une morale que tantôt il développe avec abondance et que tantôt il condense en un aphorisme. Cette morale, il ne se soucie pas d'en donner une interprétation très particulière ; il se méfie des opinions particulières, qui sont dangereuses et qu'il flétrit du nom de paradoxe. Mais il aime les lieux communs : il pense, il sent, il s'indigne en commun.

Mesdames et Messieurs, si j'ai tant insisté sur ce portrait du bourgeois français, c'est que c'est en même temps le portrait de Victor Hugo, auquel il ne manque qu'un détail, un détail, qui, je l'avoue, a une certaine importance : c'est le rayon du génie. Et Victor Hugo est cela même : c'est un bourgeois qui a du génie.

Par là se trouvent déterminés les thèmes qui s'imposeront à l'inspiration du poète.

L'amour a très peu inspiré Victor Hugo. Il y a, à coup sûr, dans ses premiers recueils, quelques pièces où il est parlé d'amour, mais cela est fade, banal et ennuyeux. Plus tard, il y aura chez lui une certaine note d'émotion sensuelle. Mais le goût du plaisir, ce n'est pas l'amour. Et, en effet, rappelez-vous les vers d'amour qui peuvent chanter dans vos mémoires : ils ne sont pas de Victor Hugo.

En revanche, peut-être serait-il inexact d'appeler Victor Hugo le poète de la famille, mais, en tout

cas, il est très vrai de dire qu'il est le poète de sa famille. Il a mis dans ses vers toute sa famille : il y a mis son père, "ce héros au sourire si doux ;" sa mère, dont il fait, bien gratuitement, une brigande vendéenne ; son frère, qui s'appelait Eugène ; il s'y est mis lui-même, avec ses souvenirs d'enfance, avec les émotions de son foyer ; il y a mis sa femme, il y a mis ses enfants.

Mais c'est une des meilleures parties de l'originalité de Victor Hugo que la façon dont il a su parler des enfants, et cela dans un pays où les enfants tiennent beaucoup de place dans la famille, mais où ils n'en tiennent aucune dans la littérature. Remarquez-le, dans toute notre littérature classique, il n'y a pas d'enfants. Chez les Grecs, Iphigénie suppliante montre à son père le petit Oreste, tout petit, en larmes, qui pleure parce qu'il ne sait pas parler, et qui tient sa robe. Chez nous, dans la pièce de Racine, vous ne trouveriez pas Oreste : Oreste est trop petit, on l'a envoyé se coucher de bonne heure.

Au XVIIe siècle, La Fontaine est le seul qui ait parlé des enfants. Vous savez ce qu'il en a dit, il a dit :

Cet âge est sans pitié.

Il avait horreur des enfants.

Victor Hugo est le premier qui ait su exprimer le charme de l'enfance. Je crois bien qu'il est resté le seul. Et il me semble que je devine à peu près pourquoi les meilleurs de nos poètes n'ont pas

réussi à peindre la grâce de l'enfance : c'est que, en vérité, c'est trop difficile. Demandez-le aux peintres ; demandez-leur ce qu'ils pensent de la difficulté qu'il y a à faire un portrait d'enfant.

Mesdames, Messieurs, un portrait d'homme, c'est relativement facile. Un homme, c'est carré, ou c'est tout rond, ou quelquefois c'est anguleux ; mais c'est toujours quelque chose de net, d'arrêté.

Un portrait de femme, c'est beaucoup plus délicat. Il faut un peu flatter l'original, parce que, à force de se l'être entendu dire, une femme se croit presque toujours un peu plus agréable qu'elle ne l'est ; mais il ne faut pas trop flatter, parce que ce serait désobligeant. Et, en fait, le charme d'une femme n'est pas deux fois le même, et il n'est pas le même pour deux personnes : tout dépend avec quels yeux nous la regardons.

Mais un portrait d'enfant ! Chez l'enfant, justement, la grâce est quelque chose d'indécis ; ce sont des sentiments à peine ébauchés ; c'est une parole encore incertaine. Le charme de l'enfant est caractérisé par ceci, qu'il est insaisissable et fugitif. Quand on parle des enfants, presque toujours on le fait avec mièvrerie, et, c'est le cas de le dire, avec puérilité. C'est le mérite de Victor Hugo d'avoir conservé à l'enfant dans certaines pièces, comme la pièce intitulée *A des oiseaux envolés*, ou celle qui est intitulée *l'Enfant de Louis*, toute sa grâce. Et plus tard, quand Victor Hugo aura perdu sa fille, noyée dans cet accident de Villequier, sa douleur paternelle lui arrachera des accents dont l'éloquence vient justement de leur simplicité.

Puis, nous trouvons dans les recueils lyriques de Victor Hugo beaucoup des épisodes de la chronique au jour le jour : les événements publics ou privés, les naissances, les deuils, les cérémonies, les morts, les suicides ; surtout, la politique tient beaucoup de place dans cette œuvre de Victor Hugo. Et, à ce sujet, on a souvent reproché à Victor Hugo ses variations en politique. Il est très exact que Victor Hugo a célébré avec la même ferveur les opinions les plus différentes. Mais il serait injuste de le lui reprocher. Victor Hugo n'a pas changé d'opinion, pour une raison excellente : c'est qu'il n'en a jamais eu. Les opinions qu'il a traduites n'étaient pas à lui : elles étaient en lui. Le siècle les avait déposées en lui, pour qu'il les lui rendît amplifiées et magnifiées. Si ses opinions n'étaient pas toujours les mêmes, ce n'était pas la faute de Victor Hugo : ce n'est pas lui, c'est le siècle qui avait changé.

C'est ainsi que, dans ses premiers recueils, Victor Hugo est royaliste et catholique ; et non pas avec tiédeur, mais royaliste d'un royalisme effréné, catholique d'un catholicisme éperdu. Pour la Vendée, pour Quiberon, pour la naissance du duc de Bordeaux, pour le baptême du duc de Bordeaux, pour les funérailles de Louis XVIII, pour le sacre de Charles X, que sais-je encore ? il a des hymnes tout prêts.

Il ne tarit pas sur les bienfaits de la royauté :

Ah ! que la royauté, peuples, est douce et belle !

Il est impossible d'être davantage, vous le voyez, le champion du trône et de l'autel.

Puis, voici que l'opinion se passionne pour ce petit peuple grec qui secoue la domination du Turc. Victor Hugo écrit *les Orientales*, qui sont toutes pleines du souffle de la liberté, pleines de la liberté et de son culte farouche. C'est Canaris, c'est l'enfant grec qui veut de la poudre et des balles, et c'est le klephte, le klephte avec son fusil brisé :

> Un klephte a pour tous biens l'air du ciel, l'eau des puits,
> Un bon fusil bronzé par la fumée, et puis
> La liberté sur la montagne.............................

Dans *les Feuilles d'automne*, composées au lendemain de 1830, il y a déjà un souffle révolutionnaire venu des journées de juillet. Le poète entend à l'horizon un bruit qui parfois tombe et parfois recommence ; c'est un murmure sourd, un grondement lointain et menaçant ; c'est la haute marée du peuple qui se rapproche, qui menace de tout envahir. Dans cette lutte des rois et des peuples, Victor Hugo prendra parti pour les peuples. Il considère que c'est son devoir et, oubliant la famille, l'amour, l'enfance, il ajoutera à sa lyre une corde nouvelle qui sera la corde d'airain.

Les Chants du crépuscule, comme le titre l'indique, sont consacrés justement à interroger le caractère de l'époque, d'une époque qui semble trouble, incertaine. Gouvernement, forme sociale, tout semble remis en question. Une lueur indécise flotte sur les idées, sur les croyances, sur les passions.

Et cette lueur idécise, qu'est-ce qu'elle annonce ? Annonce-t-elle le renouveau ? annonce-t-elle la décadence ? est-ce le jour qui se lève, est-ce le jour qui finit ? On ne sait :

Rien n'est dans le grand jour et rien n'est dans la nuit ;
Et le monde, sur qui flottent les apparences,
Est à demi couvert d'une ombre où tout reluit.
....
Nous voyons bien là-bas un jour mystérieux,
Mais nous ne savons pas si cette aube lointaine
Nous annonce le jour, le vrai soleil ardent.......
C'est peut-être le soir qu'on prend pour une aurore.

Mais d'ailleurs, à travers tous ces recueils, comme dans ceux qui suivront, celui qui est le héros de Victor Hugo, c'est Napoléon.

Vous savez le phénomène qui s'est produit chez nous au sujet du nom et de la personne de Napoléon. Il s'est formé une légende sous nos yeux et en plein XIXe siècle. Dans un siècle d'histoire, de critique, d'informations précises, nous avons assisté au même travail de création légendaire qui s'était formée jadis autour des noms de Charlemagne et de Roland. Victor Hugo a été l'un des ouvriers les plus puissants de cette légende napoléonienne.

Depuis le début de son œuvre, il est hanté par cette image, par ce souvenir de Napoléon. Au temps de sa ferveur royaliste, il représente Napoléon comme un fléau de Dieu ; mais il en parle. Il l'appelle Buonaparte, ce qui est la façon désobligeante de prononcer le nom de Bonaparte ; mais ce nom, il ne peut pas le taire. Puis, l'admiration éclate, et

dans des pièces telles que *Bounaberdi, Lui,* d'autres encore, ce qu'il célèbre, c'est le Napoléon promenant ses bataillons vainqueurs à travers l'Europe et revenant joyeux dans sa vieille capitale aux acclamations de tout un peuple.

Enfin, dans ses dernières pièces, ce qu'il va dire, c'est le Napoléon de l'exil, frappé dans ses rêves d'empereur, dans sa gloire aussi bien que dans ses affections de père. Et c'est là ce qui est décisif. Car, notez-le, ce n'est pas la prospérité qui sacre les grands hommes, c'est le malheur. Il ne nous suffit pas que nous ayons à les admirer, nous voulons avoir à les plaindre. Il faut que notre sensibilité s'émeuve, il faut que le héros s'achève en martyr ; et pour le cas de Napoléon, ce n'est pas Arcole, ce n'est pas Austerlitz, c'est le désastre final, c'est l'agonie qui va donner l'essor à la légende.

Enfin, il y a dans l'œuvre de Victor Hugo un certain nombre de développements de lieux communs de morale. Ainsi, il faut faire l'aumône : c'est la pièce intitulée *Pour les pauvres.* Il faut prier pour tout le monde : c'est *la Prière pour tous.* Il ne faut pas se suicider : c'est la pièce intitulée : *Il n'avait pas vingt ans.* Il faut être indulgent : c'est la pièce qui commence par *Oh ! n'insultez jamais une femme qui tombe.*

Voilà les principaux des thèmes que nous trouvons dans l'œuvre de Victor Hugo : thèmes sur la famille, sur les événements de chaque jour, sur la politique, sur la morale. Il me reste à chercher comment Victor Hugo a mis ces thèmes en œuvre, comment il les a traduits, et je ne me dissimule pas

que c'est là ce qui est le plus important. Car enfin, tout le monde est d'avis qu'il faut faire l'aumône, excepté cependant les économistes, et pourtant il n'y a que Victor Hugo qui ait écrit la pièce *Pour les pauvres ;* tout le monde est d'avis qu'il faut implorer la miséricorde de Dieu, et cependant Victor Hugo est le seul qui ait écrit *la Prière pour tous ;* beaucoup ont admiré Napoléon, et c'est Victor Hugo, lui seul, qui a écrit l'*Ode à la Colonne.* C'est toujours là qu'il faut en revenir, à savoir que la matière n'est rien et que tout dépend de la forme qu'un écrivain, un artiste, lui a donnée, en y appliquant son esprit et ses qualités personnelles.

Voyons donc ce qui vient de la tournure même de l'esprit de Victor Hugo, ce qui est le caractère propre de son imagination.

Or, remarquez que les premiers recueils de Victor Hugo n'étaient pas du tout des recueils originaux et où la poésie eût quoi que ce soit de nouveau. Les *Odes* ont pu être composées après les *Méditations* de Lamartine ; elles semblent antérieures et nous reportent à une forme de lyrisme qui est celle de Lebrun ou peut-être de Jean-Baptiste Rousseau.

C'est dans les *Orientales* que Victor Hugo commence à donner sa mesure, à être lui-même. Or, qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans les *Orientales ?* Il y a, dans les *Orientales,* une couleur, une lumière, des visions matérielles qui n'avaient pas encore paru dans la poésie. Or, Victor Hugo, vous le savez, n'était pas allé en Orient ; l'Orient qu'il mettait dans ses *Orientales,* il ne l'avait pas vu ; par conséquent,

il l'imaginait, et, si vous voulez, il l'inventait. Je ne prétends pas que cet Orient en fût d'autant plus vrai, mais, au point de vue de l'étude du génie de Victor Hugo, il est d'autant plus intéressant, car alors, cette lumière, cette couleur, puisque Victor Hugo ne les avait pas trouvées en dehors de lui, c'est donc qu'il les trouvait en lui.

Et c'est justement ce qui arrive. D'autres, quand ils regardent en eux-mêmes, y trouvent des émotions, des idées, des sentiments, des rêves. Victor Hugo, quand il regarde en lui, y trouve des images matérielles, y trouve des formes, des couleurs, des jeux d'ombre et de lumière.

Rappelez-vous cette pièce fameuse : *la Tristesse d'Olympio*, qu'on a souvent rapprochée du *Lac* de Lamartine et du *Souvenir* d'Alfred de Musset. C'est le même sujet. Ce qui différencie la pièce de Victor Hugo, de celles de Musset et de Lamartine, c'est que, chez Victor Hugo, l'expression du sentiment tient beaucoup moins de place que la peinture du cadre, du décor. Ici, les choses ont plus de place que les sentiments ; la nature est plus vivante que l'homme.

Rappelez-vous une autre pièce de Victor Hugo, celle qui est intitulée : *A l'Arc de triomphe de l'Étoile*. Victor Hugo se demande qu'est-ce qu'il manque à cet arc de triomphe de Paris pour donner tout à fait l'impression du sublime. Il y manque que cette impression ait été achevée, parfaite par le temps. Et Victor Hugo suppose que du temps se passe, que des siècles s'écoulent, que la ville qui fut Paris n'est plus qu'un amas de ruines,

et que sur ces ruines se d... ...ncore cet arc de triomphe, témoin d'un passé g...rieux. Alors, il lui semble que la vision serait tout à fait magnifique. Et ici, vous le voyez, qu'est-ce qui est grand ? Ce n'est plus seulement la nature, mais ce sont les pierres.

Eh bien, c'est cela même qui est caractéristique chez Victor Hugo, ce sont les choses qui font sa poésie, et la poésie française, avec lui, se charge de sensations.

Voilà un premier point. L'esprit de Victor Hugo est tout plein de belles images. Victor Hugo a le don de penser en images ; mais il ne se contente pas de penser en images : ces images, il les multiplie, il les renforce par ses procédés de développement, si vous voulez, par sa rhétorique.

La rhétorique, on a l'habitude d'en dire du mal ; on emploie généralement ce mot dans un sens défavorable. Mais, faites-y bien attention, en soi-même, la rhétorique n'est autre chose qu'un ensemble de moyens, pour développer tout le contenu d'une idée, ou encore, pour donner à une idée toute sa valeur.

Victor Hugo a su admirablement les ressources de la rhétorique, et vous allez voir comment, grâce aux ressources de cette rhétorique, il arrive à donner à sa pensée une ampleur, une magnificence qu'elle n'aurait pas eue sans cela. Voici quelques vers que je vous cite en exemple et que j'emprunte à une pièce bien connue, à la pièce *Pour les pauvres*.

Victor Hugo veut dire qu'il faut faire l'aumône, et il s'adresse ainsi aux riches :

Donnez, riches ! l'aumône est sœur de la prière...
....
Donnez ! afin que Dieu qui dote les familles
Donne à vos fils la force et la grâce à vos filles ;
Afin que votre vigne ait toujours un doux fruit ;
Afin qu'un blé plus mûr fasse plier vos granges ;
Afin d'être meilleurs ; afin de voir les anges
Passer dans vos rêves la nuit.

Donnez ! il vient un jour où la terre nous laisse :
Vos aumônes là-haut vous font une richesse.
Donnez, afin qu'on dise : Il a pitié de nous !
Afin que l'indigent que glacent les tempêtes,
Que le pauvre qui souffre à côté de vos fêtes,
Au seuil de vos palais fixe un œil moins jaloux.

Donnez ! pour être aimé du Dieu qui se fit homme,
Pour que le méchant même en s'inclinant vous nomme,
Pour que votre foyer soit calme et fraternel ;
Donnez ! afin qu'un jour, à votre heure dernière,
Contre tous vos péchés vous ayez la prière
D'un mendiant puissant au ciel.

Voilà de beaux vers, voilà un beau développement. Mais comment est-ce que Victor Hugo est arrivé ici à donner à sa pensée toute son ampleur ? Vous allez voir que c'est en employant les procédés les plus décriés de la rhétorique : l'énumération, l'énumération elle-même, et la répétition. Victor Hugo a commencé par dire une fois, et par très bien dire ceci, qui est l'idée que nous retrouverons

répétée sans cesse : Donnez ! afin que Dieu vous récompense.

> Donnez ! riches, l'aumône est sœur de la prière.

C'est bien ce que cela veut dire. Victor Hugo vient donc d'exprimer son idée une fois. Vous allez voir combien de fois il recommence :

> Donnez ! afin que Dieu, qui dote les familles,
> Donne à vos fils la force et la grâce à vos filles.

—Ça fait une fois.

> Afin que votre vigne ait toujours un doux fruit.

—Deux.

> Afin qu'un blé plus mûr fasse plier vos granges.

—Toujours la même chose, trois.

> Afin d'être meilleurs.

—Quatre.

> Afin de voir les anges passer dans vos rêves la nuit.

—Cinq.

Donnez ! il vient un jour où la terre nous laisse :
Vos aumônes là-haut vous font une richesse.

—Six.

Donnez afin qu'on dise : il a pitié de nous.

—Sept.

Afin que l'indigent que glacent les tempêtes,
Que le pauvre qui souffre à côté de vos fêtes,
Au seuil de vos palais fixe un œil moins jaloux.

—Huit.

Donnez pour être aimés du Dieu qui se fit homme.

—Neuf.

Pour que le méchant même en s'inclinant vous nomme.

—Dix.

Pour que votre foyer soit calme et fraternel.

—Onze.

Donnez ! afin qu'un jour à votre heure dernière,
Contre tous vos péchés vous ayez la prière
D'un mendiant puissant au ciel.

Vous voyez combien cela fait. Il a répété sa pensée sous des formes différentes, mais elle seule, toujours la même ; et il l'a répétée douze fois.

Donc, vous le voyez, c'est en se servant de ce procédé, qui consiste à répéter sous des formes différentes une même idée, que Victor Hugo est arrivé à faire cet admirable développement.

Je ne lui reproche pas du tout de s'être servi de ce procédé; au contraire, je le félicite de s'en être si bien servi. C'est par les procédés qu'un écrivain peut être imité et c'est pour cela que Victor Hugo aura des disciples, c'est pour cela qu'il sera chef d'école, c'est pour cela qu'il aura sur toute la littérature du siècle une si grande influence.

Un ensemble de procédés, c'est ce qu'on appelle un art, et Victor Hugo, justement, a fait rentrer dans la poésie le sentiment de l'art, ce sentiment que Lamartine avait trop dédaigné, Lamartine qui s'appelait lui-même un amateur en poésie.

Victor Hugo, nous le voyons, commence par traduire son idée en image, puis il renforce l'image par les développements, enfin il soutient l'image et le développement par le rythme, par la cadence.

Victor Hugo, de très bonne heure, a compris toutes les ressources du rythme en poésie et, dans ses premiers recueils, nous trouvons déja de purs exercices de virtuosité. Ainsi, dans *la Chasse du Burgrave,* Victor Hugo s'amuse à faire des séries de vers où un vers d'un pied alterne avec un vers de huit pieds.

Daigne protéger notre chasse,
Châsse
De Monseigneur saint Godefroi
Roi !

etc.

Dans *le Pas d'armes du roi Jean,* c'est une série de vers de trois pieds. Je n'accorde pas à ces exercices plus d'importance qu'ils n'en ont ; mais c'est que Victor Hugo sait toujours tirer de là des effets merveilleux. Par exemple, voici une strophe du *Pas d'armes du roi Jean,* qui est consacrée à évoquer l'image de Paris, du Paris du moyen âge. Vous allez voir si ces vers ne sont pas déjà singulièrement descriptifs :

Cette ville
Aux longs cris,
Qui profile
Son front gris,
Des toits frêles,
Cent tourelles,
Clochers grêles,
C'est Paris !

Est-ce que derrière ces vers dentelés et comme à jour il ne vous semble pas apercevoir l'image de ce Paris du moyen âge, avec cette architecture de légèreté et de fantaisie ?

Victor Hugo a su plus qu'aucun autre comment les sons peuvent accompagner et compléter l'impression poétique : en sorte que le vers est expressif, non pas seulement par l'idée ou le sentiment qu'il traduit, non pas seulement par l'image qu'il montre, mais par le son qui éveille en nous, au plus intime de nous-mêmes, une sorte de lointain et de mystérieux retentissement.

Ajoutez que, depuis La Fontaine, personne n'avait jamais si bien su les ressources de sonorité de

notre langue ; que personne, sauf La Fontaine, n'a eu l'oreille aussi juste, musicalement juste, que Victor Hugo. Peut-être voyez-vous maintenant pourquoi Victor Hugo est un de nos grands poètes et quelle est la place qui lui appartient.

Notez que, aujourd'hui, je n'ai pu vous parler que du Victor Hugo des premiers recueils lyriques. Nous aurons à y revenir, à l'apercevoir sous un autre aspect. Mais déjà j'ai pu vous montrer ce qui, chez Victor Hugo, est caractéristique et essentiel. Chez d'autres poètes, ce que nous admirons, ce sont surtout les idées, les conceptions, les sentiments ; d'autres poètes ont éveillé nos âmes à des émotions nouvelles et nous ont fait apercevoir en nous des replis de notre cœur que nous ne connaissions pas. Chez Victor Hugo, il n'en est pas ainsi. Mais lui, il a ouvert nos yeux sur des images nouvelles ; il a ouvert nos oreilles à des sonorités nouvelles ; il nous a donné l'habitude d'éprouver certaines sensations délicieuses, et depuis, nous n'avons plus été capables de nous en passer et nous avons demandé d'abord à tous les poètes qui sont venus ensuite de nous en donner l'absorbante volupté.



Troisième Conférence.— 14 avril 1898.

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

Messeigneurs, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Alfred de Musset est né en 1810. Il était d'une famille de bourgeoisie lettrée. Il fut élevé très doucement, très gâté. On le mit au collège Henri IV; il y fit de bonnes études. C'est tout. Il n'y a pas autre chose dans toute la jeunesse d'Alfred de Musset, de même qu'il ne s'est rien passé dans sa vie et que, pour parler comme lui, toute son histoire c'est l'histoire de sa sensibilité, de son cœur, de ses nerfs.



ALFRED DE MUSSET.

Alfred de Musset est d'abord un enfant nerveux. Tous ceux qui l'ont connu dans les premières années en ont rapporté cette impression. Ce qui, chez lui, est caractéristique, c'est l'extrême mobilité

de l'humeur, une humeur changeante, fantasque, capricieuse, allant, sans raison apparente, d'un extrême à l'autre. Quelquefois, pour un rien, l'enfant entrait dans de violentes colères, et alors il devenait vraiment méchant, avec un désir de faire mal, de nuire, de blesser. Puis, l'accès une fois passé, il avait honte de lui-même, il se repentait, il se détestait et il s'ingéniait à se faire pardonner, c'étaient des crises de larmes. Et alors il était si séduisant, il trouvait des façons si charmantes de demander pardon ! Il était de ceux dont on souhaiterait presque qu'ils eussent des torts, pour avoir ensuite à les leur pardonner.

Cette prédominance des nerfs dans le tempérament est une disposition assez commune, et on sait à combien de déceptions elle expose ceux qui y sont sujets. Ceux-là, le temps pourra venir pour eux, l'expérience : rien n'y fera ; ils seront toujours à la merci de leurs impressions, prisonniers de l'heure et du moment, cédant au caprice et déplorant d'y céder au moment même qu'ils y cèdent. Un rien les irrite, un souffle les abat ; un sourire qu'ils ont recueilli en passant suffit pour les faire mourir de joie ; un sourire qui a oublié de luire pour eux suffit pour qu'ils s'en aillent mourir de douleur. Ils sentent plus vivement que les autres, ils ont les impressions d'une manière plus aiguë ; mais aussi, au moment même où ils ont les impresssions, ils sentent qu'elles leur échappent, ils ont comme le tact immédiat de ce qu'il y a de décevant dans toutes les choses d'ici-bas. C'est pour cela que chez eux le sourire se mouille si tôt de larmes, et que leur

gaieté, cette gaieté nerveuse, s'achève si volontiers en sanglots.

Ce qu'a été Musset enfant, il le restera dans toute sa vie et dans toute son œuvre. Il nous dit :

Mes premiers vers sont d'un enfant,
Les seconds d'un adolescent,
Les derniers à peine d'un homme.

Vous voyez, il l'avoue, même lorsqu'il est devenu un poète, même lorsqu'il est devenu un homme : il est toujours resté l'enfant nerveux, à l'humeur capricieuse, changeante, fantasque, que je viens de vous montrer.

Alfred de Musset a vécu toute son enfance, toute sa jeunesse à Paris. C'est un Parisien. Et je n'attache pas plus d'importance qu'il n'en faut au pays d'origine d'un écrivain : deux écrivains peuvent être nés dans le même pays ou dans la même ville, et être extrêmement différents, ou même n'avoir entre eux aucun point commun. Mais si l'influence du pays d'origine, du terroir, est quelque chose de difficile à démêler, il y a une influence qui est très certaine, qu'on voit s'appliquer constamment : c'est l'influence du milieu, l'influence de l'atmosphère dans laquelle on a vécu. Or, à Paris, ce qui importe justement, c'est l'atmosphère. Il y a une atmosphère de Paris. Cette atmosphère est faite des éléments les plus complexes ; elle a cependant son unité. Elle a son unité au point qu'elle est presque unique. Paris, c'est tout à la fois le confluent de ce qu'il y a de plus

frivole et de ce qu'il y a de plus sérieux ; de ceux qui cherchent à s'amuser et de ceux qui veulent travailler, des hommes qui vivent pour le plaisir et des hommes qui vivent pour la pensée. De cette complexité il résulte que l'air est chargé d'une sorte d'électricité; il y a de la fièvre dans l'air, et ceux qui le respirent continûment ont une sorte d'excitation au cerveau.

L'air de Paris, Musset l'a respiré toujours, et de là vient justement un côté de son caractère. Dans cet air de Paris, on veut vivre vite, se hâter et assister à la vie comme à une sorte de comédie dont les actes sont divers, dont le décor est sans cesse renouvelé. Le Parisien a horreur de tout ce qui pèse et de tout ce qui est lourd, qui dure. Le Parisien est en garde contre le pédantisme et il s'arme contre lui de la raillerie, d'une raillerie qui est d'ailleurs assez innocente. Le Parisien est railleur, il est moqueur, il n'est pas méchant. Et même sous ses apparences de scepticisme, il conserve un grand fonds de naïveté et de candeur. Ce qui est vrai, c'est que dans l'air de Paris les choses prennent une apparence brillante, légère. Et c'est cela même que j'aperçois dans l'esprit d'Alfred de Musset.

Cet enfant de Paris est en outre un enfant du XVIIIe siècle ; non pas du XVIIIe siècle passionné de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, mais de l'autre, du XVIIIe siècle sceptique, de celui de Voltaire. La tradition de ce XVIIIe siècle incrédule, Alfred de Musset l'avait trouvée dans sa famille même. Le père d'Alfred de Musset s'était occupé de travaux litté-

raires sur l'époque de la fin du XVIIIe siècle, et dans les conversations, à chaque instant, Musset avait entendu parler des gens, des hommes, des choses du XVIIIe siècle. L'impression que lui avaient faite ces conversations familiales s'était augmentée par les lectures. Alfred de Musset a beaucoup lu les écrivains du XVIIIe siècle. Et si, un peu plus tard, il apostrophe Voltaire de la façon que vous savez :

Dors-tu content, Voltaire, et ton hideux sourire
Voltige-t-il encore sur tes os décharnés ?......

si Alfred de Musset éprouve le besoin d'adresser à l'ombre de Voltaire cette apostrophe violente, c'est apparemment qu'il sentait en lui encore vivante cette influence de Voltaire, et c'est qu'il pouvait bien protester contre elle ; mais il protestait d'autant plus qu'il la sentait en lui et qu'il n'arrivait pas à s'en débarrasser.

Enfin, je noterai un dernier trait chez Alfred de Musset. C'est un certain goût inné de l'élégance. Alfred de Musset, par sa naissance, appartient à la bourgeoisie modeste, et cependant, dès le collège, il s'est lié surtout avec ceux de ses camarades qui appartenaient à des familles aristocratiques ou à des familles riches. Ce n'est pas de sa part vanité et sotte prétention, mais c'est qu'Alfred de Musset, par un goût instinctif, avait besoin des formes élégantes, raffinées, de la société et de la vie. C'est là seulement qu'il se trouvait tout à fait à sa place et tout à fait à son aise ; c'est là seulement qu'il trouvait l'emploi de certaines qualités, d'une sorte

de délicatesse, du raffinement de son esprit, de la coquetterie, s'il faut le dire, et du besoin de plaire qui était en lui. Avec l'élégance de sa tournure, avec l'élégance de son esprit, avec ses beaux cheveux blonds et ses yeux bleus, Alfred de Musset était fait pour les succès mondains. Et il est resté, en effet, un mondain.

Un enfant nerveux, un fils du XVIIIe siècle, un enfant de Paris, un mondain, voilà les traits constitutifs que je relève chez Alfred de Musset. Et vous voyez déjà par ce que je viens de vous dire en quoi Alfred de Musset diffère de ses illustres rivaux, d'un Lamartine et d'un Victor Hugo.

Mais voulez-vous vous faire une image d'Alfred de Musset tel qu'il était à dix-huit ans ? Il existe d'Alfred de Musset un portrait où Musset est dans un costume de page, qu'il aimait à porter. Et, en effet, c'est à un page que cet Alfred de Musset de dix-huit ans ferait assez bien songer, au page que Beaumarchais a mis dans le *Mariage de Figaro*, à Chérubin. Vous connaissez cette figure séduisante et inquiétante, Chérubin, l'adolescent qui sent son cœur gonfler d'il ne sait quel trouble. Ce Chérubin personnifie un moment, une date de la vie : c'est l'éveil d'une âme au désir. Et Musset, avec la même hardiesse que le Chérubin de Beaumarchais, va aller au-devant de toutes les émotions, se jeter au-devant de la vie, qu'il défie, et à laquelle il demande toutes les jouissances.

C'est bien ainsi que nous le peignent ceux qui l'ont rencontré vers cette époque. Voici le portrait qu'en trace Sainte-Beuve :

"Il n'avait pas dix-huit ans. Le front mâle et fier, la joue en fleur et qui gardait encore les roses de l'enfance, la narine enflée du souffle du désir, il avançait le talon sonnant et l'œil au ciel, comme assuré de sa conquête et tout plein de l'orgueil de la vie."

Et lui-même, Alfred de Musset, un peu plus tard, fatigué, lassé de beaucoup de choses, se revoit dans le passé tel qu'il était alors :

Il était gai, jeune et hardi,
Il se jetait en étourdi
A l'aventure.
Librement il respirait l'air,
Et parfois il se montrait fier
D'une blessure.

Ce Musset, jeune, fier, hardi, insouciant, impertinent, c'est celui qui va publier les *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie.*

Dans les *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie,* ce que nous trouvons, ce sont d'abord et surtout des pièces d'un caractère tout à fait romantique ; ce sont des histoires d'amour et des histoires de duels, dans un cadre très italien ou très espagnol. Mais, à côté de ces pièces, où sont appliqués docilement les procédés du romantisme, on en trouve d'autres, comme, par exemple, cette ballade à la lune :

Sur un clocher jauni,
Comme un point sur un i,

cette lune, à laquelle Alfred de Musset adresse toutes sortes de questions saugrenues :

C'était dans la nuit brune,
Sur le clocher jauni,
La lune,
Comme un point sur un i.

Lune, quel esprit sombre
Promène au bout d'un fil,
Dans l'ombre,
Ta face et ton profil ?

Es-tu l'œil du ciel borgne ?
Quel chérubin cafard
Nous lorgne
Sous ton masque blafard ?

N'es-tu rien qu'une boule ?
Qu'un grand faucheux bien gras
Qui roule
Sans pattes et sans bras ?

Es-tu, je t'en soupçonne,
Le vieux cadran de fer
Qui sonne
L'heure aux damnés d'enfer ?

Sur ton front qui voyage,
Ce soir ont-ils compté
Quel âge
A leur éternité ?

Est-ce un ver qui te ronge,
Quand ton disque noirci
S'allonge
En croissant rétréci ?

Qui t'avait éborgnée
L'autre nuit ? T'étais-tu
Cognée
A quelque arbre pointu ?

La *Ballade à la lune* à côté des autres pièces, c'est justement la parodie à côté de la copie. Et, en effet, Alfred de Musset n'a jamais été, dans l'école romantique, qu'un écolier indiscipliné. Il s'est moqué très vite de la couleur locale, de ce bariolage de couleurs, de ce badigeonnage si facile qui consiste, comme il dit, à peindre

Quelque ville aux toits bleus, quelque blanche mosquée
Avec l'horizon rouge et le ciel assorti.

Et de même il raillera l'étalage de sentimentalité :

Moi, je hais les pleurards, les rêveurs à nacelles,
Les amants de la nuit, des lacs, des cascatelles.

C'est qu'il y a, chez Alfred de Musset, un écrivain de race tout à fait française, de la race des Molière, des La Fontaine, des Boileau, un écrivain qui a horreur de l'exagération et de l'affectation ; il a le goût de ce qui est mesuré, du bon sens, et, au milieu même des pires excentricités, il se souviendra toujours du bon sens. Le Français est conteur, et Alfred de Musset, dans *Simone*, par exemple, a écrit de très jolis contes. Alfred de Musset, comme le Français aussi, est un causeur ; il cause en vers ; il cause en vers avec esprit, avec légèreté, avec souplesse. Les *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie* eurent un très grand succès. On y apprécia d'abord les qualités proprement poétiques, l'éclat des images, certaines larges comparaisons ; mais, surtout, ce que l'on y aima, c'est qu'on y trouvait de l'esprit.

Nous aimons beaucoup l'esprit en France — on l'aime partout,— et il faut bien dire que les romantiques avaient manqué d'esprit. Lamartine n'a pas d'esprit, et même il est assez bizarre de parler d'esprit à propos de Lamartine. On ne s'imagine guère Lamartine, dans la barque qui voguait sur le lac silencieux, en train de débiter des paradoxes ou de tourner des épigrammes à Elvire. Alfred de Vigny, dans sa *Tour d'ivoire*, on ne le suppose guère en train de badiner. Sainte-Beuve a eu de l'esprit en prose, — quand il s'est agi d'égratigner les confrères, — mais il n'a pas d'esprit dans ses vers. Et pour ce qui est de Victor Hugo, il est bien vrai qu'il a du goût pour une sorte de drôlerie énorme, de plaisanterie gigantesque ; mais ce n'est pas tout à fait la même chose que d'avoir de l'esprit, et il nous est bien difficile d'appeler spirituel un homme qui aimait les calembours.

De même qu'il réconcilie la poésie avec l'esprit, Alfred de Musset, dans ce premier recueil, y fait rentrer la gaieté. Et vous savez aussi que les romantiques n'étaient pas gais. Ils étaient tous, ou pompeusement solennels, ou désespérément lugubres. Enfin, en voilà un qui ne portait pas le diable en terre !

Mais surtout, ce qu'on aima dans ce recueil, c'est que, d'un bout à l'autre, dans tous les vers, sous tous les mots, il y avait une poussée, une explosion de jeunesse. De la jeunesse, Alfred de Musset, qui alors avait dix-huit ans, a les qualités et aussi les défauts, je veux dire l'impertinence, l'air cavalier, le mépris hautain pour tout ce qui n'est pas les

idées et les sentiments de son âge. Mais, Mesdames et Messieurs, c'est de la jeunesse qu'il est vrai de dire que nous l'aimons jusque dans ses défauts. Nous aimons la jeunesse, nous autres déjà engagés sur l'autre versant de la vie, parce qu'elle nous reporte à un temps qui nous est resté cher ; nous l'aimons comme un bien qui est très rare. Car c'est une erreur de croire que tout le monde, à un certain moment de sa vie, ait été jeune. On n'a pas le temps, on a trop de choses à faire, la vie est trop occupée, la société est trop bien encadrée, on n'a pas le temps d'être jeune. Et enfin, il ne faut pas croire que nous en voulions aux jeunes gens d'un excès de confiance en eux-mêmes. Au contraire, car, sur ce chemin de la vie, il faut avoir beaucoup d'illusions au début, pour en conserver quelques-unes à la fin. Et c'est pourquoi nous n'avons que des regards d'indulgence pour les jeunes gens que nous voyons partir en chantant, au-devant de tant d'épreuves qui les attendent.

Pour vous donner une idée plus complète de ce côté, de cet aspect du talent de Musset, il faut que je fasse quelques emprunts à son théâtre. Mais peut-être ne vous en plaindrez-vous pas. C'est dans le théâtre d'Alfred de Musset que je trouverai surtout ces qualités de fantaisie.

La fantaisie ! Il y a une pièce d'Alfred de Musset intitulée *Fantasio*, et je pense bien que Fantasio emprunte son nom à la fantaisie. Ici, en effet, les personnages, l'action, les dialogues, les propos, tout est fantaisie.

Nous sommes en Bavière, mais dans une Bavière imaginaire, dans une Bavière chimérique. La fille du roi de Bavière, la princesse Elsbeth, doit épouser le prince de Mantoue. Et la ville est en fête, Munich est en réjouissances; les bourgeois, les jeunes gens se promènent dans les rues, et le jeune Fantasio est assis dans une taverne avec son ami Spark. Ils causent, et leur conversation effleure tous les sujets, sans peine, sans effort, et surtout sans raison. " Beaucoup parler, dit Fantasio, voilà l'important." Il parle beaucoup. Il dit des absurdités et il dit de jolies choses; il en dit même de profondes, car il lui arrive en passant, et sans le faire exprès, de toucher à ce qui fait le fond même de la misère humaine. Car qu'est-ce qu'il y a de douloureux dans notre nature humaine ? Eh bien, entre autres choses c'est ceci, à savoir que nous ne pouvons pas sortir de nous-mêmes; nous ne pouvons jamais avoir d'autres visées que les nôtres et d'autres sentiments que les nôtres. Nous ne pouvons pas être " ce monsieur qui passe." Eh bien ! c'est cela qui désole Fantasio : " Si je pouvais seulement sortir de ma peau pendant une heure ou deux. Si je pouvais être ce monsieur qui passe.... Ce monsieur qui passe est charmant; regarde : quelle belle culotte de soie, quelles belles fleurs rouges sur son gilet; ses breloques de montre battent sur sa panse en opposition avec les basques de son habit qui voltigent sur ses mollets. Je suis sûr que cet homme-là a dans la tête un millier d'idées qui me sont absolument étrangères. Son essence lui est particulière. Hélas ! tout ce que les hommes se

disent entre eux se ressemble, les idées qu'ils échangent sont presque toujours les mêmes dans toutes leurs conversations ; mais dans l'intérieur de toutes ces machines isolées, quels replis, quels compartiments secrets ! C'est tout un monde que chacun porte en lui, un monde ignoré, qui naît et qui meurt en silence. Quelle solitude que tous ces corps humains !"

Et voilà justement ce qui est triste : nous aurons beau faire, nous n'arriverons jamais à pénétrer entièrement l'âme d'autrui ; nous aurons beau faire, il y aura toujours en nous des replis qui resteront secrets pour le regard d'autrui. Dans ces replis secrets, nous seuls nous pouvons descendre ; et encore ne faut-il pas que nous y descendions trop, parce que le vertige pourrait bientôt nous prendre. Cela dessèche, attriste et trouble de trop regarder en nous. Que faut-il donc faire ? Quel est le secret pour vivre heureux, ou, tout au moins, pour vivre ? Eh bien ! il y a un remède, qui est évidemment le plus efficace qu'on ait trouvé contre les tourments de la pensée, c'est celui qui consiste à supprimer la pensée. Alfred de Musset remarque qu'il n'y a pas de maître d'armes mélancolique. C'est vrai. Mais ici le remède est peut-être pire que le mal, et tout le monde ne se résout pas à se faire maître d'armes. Que reste-t-il alors ? C'est de se soumettre aux choses, de tâcher de se transformer en elles, de s'oublier soi-même.

Dans la disposition d'esprit où vous voyez qu'est Fantasio, il faut absolument qu'il commette une grande folie ; il a besoin de faire une de ces excen-

tricités dont nous rêvons dans nos heures de philosophie, mais que nous ne mettons pas à exécution, parce que nous sommes lâches. Fantasio n'hésitera pas. Il aperçoit passer un enterrement. C'est le bouffon du roi qui est mort. Fantasio prend le costume du bouffon, met sa bosse et s'introduit ainsi dans le palais. De cette façon il surprend le secret des fiançailles de la princesse Elsbeth. Ce sont de tristes fiançailles. Elsbeth épouse par résignation, pour la raison d'État, le prince de Mantoue, qui est ridicule et sot. Ce mariage est un sacrifice, c'est un meurtre ; il ne faut pas que ce mariage se fasse.

Mais comment est-ce que Fantasio va empêcher ce mariage de se faire ? Il s'avise pour cela d'un moyen auquel vous n'auriez peut-être pas songé.

Au bout d'un hameçon, pendu au bout d'un fil, il pêche la perruque du prince de Mantoue. Une perruque qui s'élève et se balance dans les airs, quelle que soit la tête qu'elle découvre, c'est toujours amusant, c'est en soi une bonne farce ; mais, dans les circonstances où opère Fantasio, son espièglerie prend des proportions tout à fait particulières ; elle dépasse les bornes d'une simple plaisanterie, elle devient un grand événement, car le prince de Mantoue est furieux, il va rentrer dans ses États se mettre à la tête de ses troupes. Ce sera la guerre. Ce sera pour un peuple la défaite, pour l'un et l'autre beaucoup de ruines. Mais Fantasio ne songe à rien de tout cela, et pour lui, il lui semble que le plus important, c'était d'épargner un chagrin, un gros chagrin à la petite princesse Elsbeth.

Dans *Fantasio*, il y a Fantasio et il y a Elsbeth. Elsbeth est une des jolies figures de jeunes filles qu'il y ait dans notre littérature, — et vous savez qu'il n'y en a pas beaucoup. La jeune fille, chez nous, on la représente toujours d'après un type de convention. On en fait l'ingénue, l'ingénue de théâtre, qui est niaise, bebête et bêlante. Cette ingénue, Alfred de Musset en trace à l'occasion le portrait, et c'est Fantasio, justement, qui nous dit qu'elle le fait songer à un petit serin qu'il a, un serin qui a une serinette dans le corps. On pousse tout doucement un ressort sous la patte gauche, et il chante tous les opéras nouveaux. Il y a beaucoup de petites filles très bien élevées qui n'ont pas d'autre procédé que celui-là. Elles ont un petit ressort, un joli petit ressort en diamant, fin comme la montre d'un petit-maître ; le gouverneur ou la gouvernante fait jouer le ressort, et vous voyez aussitôt les lèvres s'ouvrir avec le sourire le plus gracieux, une charmante cascatelle de paroles mielleuses sortent avec le plus doux murmure, et toutes les convenances sociales, pareilles à des nymphes légères, se mettent aussitôt à dansotter sur la pointe du pied autour de la fontaine merveilleuse. Le prétendu ouvre des yeux ébahis, l'assistance chuchotte avec intelligence, et le père, rempli d'un secret contentement, regarde avec orgueil les boucles d'or de ses souliers.

La jeune fille, il est très difficile de la peindre, parce que la grande réserve que lui imposent les mœurs fait qu'elle ne livre pas ses idées, ses senti-

ments, et parce qu'il y a chez elle forcément quelque chose d'indécis, d'incertain encore.

Alfred de Musset a fort bien su dire ces rêves romanesques qui hantent la jeune fille vers ses dix-huit ans. Ces rêves se concentrent assez ordinairement sur le prince Charmant. Il lui semble que ce prince Charmant va, le plus naturellement du monde, sortir de l'ombre et, avec son manteau de velours, sa chaîne d'or, l'emporter dans ses bras, tremblante et ravie.

Elsbeth est romanesque, elle aussi. D'abord parce qu'elle est une jeune fille, ensuite parce que sa gouvernante lui a farci l'imagination de toutes sortes de lectures absurdes. Elsbeth rêvait du prince Charmant, c'est le prince de Mantoue qui est venu. Aussi, quand elle a vu la distance entre son rêve et la réalité, elle en a été triste à pleurer. Cependant, elle s'est résignée, parce qu'elle connaît son devoir. Elle sait très bien que les petites princesses ne sont pas sur la terre pour être heureuses,—et les petites bourgeoises non plus . . . Pour les princesses, il y a la raison d'État, et pour les petites bourgeoises, il y a le mariage de raison.

Elsbeth était romanesque : c'est un caractère de jeune fille. Mais il y en a d'autres dans ce théâtre d'Alfred de Musset. Voici, dans *Il ne faut jurer de rien,* mademoiselle Cécile de Mantes. Cécile de Mantes, c'est simplement une jeune fille de qui l'innocence fait tout le charme. Un jeune homme, un écervelé, un jeune fat, un certain Valentin, a fait le pari de la séduire, comme cela, tout de suite, dans les quarante-huit heures. Pour arriver à

ce beau résultat, il invente tout un stratagème. Il se fait verser par son postillon devant le château de la jeune fille, lui envoie des billets incendiaires, lui donne un rendez-vous dans le parc, et tout ce manège, digne de don Juan ou de Machiavel, aboutit à quoi ? à ce qu'il se jette, respectueux et timide, aux pieds de la jeune fille et lui demande de lui faire la grâce de devenir sa femme.

Cécile de Mantes, c'est l'innocence et c'est la pureté, une pureté qui chante dans sa voix, qui rayonne dans ses yeux, qui fait autour d'elle une atmosphère à laquelle les plus indifférents ne résistent pas.

Et voulez-vous savoir ce que deviendra Cécile de Mantes, quand elle sera femme ? Musset nous le dirait, en nous citant l'exemple que nous trouvons dans un autre proverbe de lui intitulé *Barberine.*

Barberine est restée seule au château, pendant que son mari est allé faire la guerre. Barberine est jeune, Barberine est jolie, et il est très facile de prévoir que, en l'absence du mari, le château où Barberine file sa quenouille sera l'objet d'entreprises qui ne seront pas des entreprises militaires. Et, en effet, de même que Valentin tout à l'heure avait juré de séduire Cécile dans les quarante-huit heures, voici un jeune homme, le jeune chevalier de Rosemberg, qui prétend avoir aussi vite raison de la vertu de Barberine. Ce Rosemberg n'est pas un méchant homme, il est tout à fait dépourvu de perversité; il est seulement fat, c'est tout à fait un bon jeune homme. Barberine s'en rend compte et elle est d'avis

qu'il lui suffit d'une petite leçon donnée gentiment. C'est pourquoi, après l'avoir prié de l'attendre dans la grande salle, elle sort, et Rosemberg, avec étonnement d'abord, puis avec effroi, entend verrouiller la porte par l'extérieur. Un guichet s'ouvre, et par ce guichet Barberine l'avertit qu'il est prisonnier, et qu'il aura à manger, quand il aura filé, filé de cette quenouille qui est là-bas. Qu'il file et il mangera. Dure alternative, surtout pour un séducteur. Filera-t-il, ou jeûnera-t-il ? Est-ce la vanité qui l'emportera ? C'est la faim qui l'emporte.

Et voilà comment se conduit une honnête femme. Elle n'éprouve pas le besoin de faire du tapage et d'ameuter les gens, elle ne se drape pas dans sa vertu, elle ne se pose pas en héroïne, parce qu'elle a fait son devoir : une honnête femme, jusque dans sa vertu, met de la simplicité, de la bonne grâce et de l'esprit.

Je reviens à l'œuvre proprement poétique d'Alfred de Musset. Dans les recueils qui suivent, et notamment dans *le Spectacle dans un fauteuil*, apparaît une note nouvelle : la mélancolie, la tristesse, une note plus grave et bientôt désespérée. Nous pouvons maintenant nous installer au centre même de l'œuvre d'Alfred de Musset et nous demander quelle est la conception qu'il se fait de son art et quelle est la conception qu'il se fait de la vie.

Sur la conception qu'Alfred de Musset se fait de son art, quand même elle ne se dégagerait pas suffisamment de son œuvre, nous avons son témoignage. Alfred de Musset, à cette question : Qu'est-ce que c'est que la poésie ? répond de la façon suivante ; il

répond que : "Être poète, c'est écouter dans son cœur l'écho de son génie." Et c'est lui encore qui, dans des vers adressés à un ami, écrit ceci :

Tu te frappais le front en lisant Lamartine.
....
Ah! frappe-toi le cœur, c'est là qu'est le génie.

Ainsi, le génie est dans le cœur, la poésie est dans le sentiment. Ce que doit faire un poète, d'après Alfred de Musset, c'est de se mettre lui-même dans son œuvre ; c'est de faire sa poésie avec ses joies et avec ses souffrances, mais surtout avec ses souffrances. C'est là le sens de cette fameuse comparaison du poète avec le pélican.

Le pélican a erré pendant la journée tout entière, cherchant de la nourriture pour ses petits. Il n'en a pas trouvé, et lorsqu'il revient le soir, ce sont ses entrailles mêmes qu'il donne en pâture à ses petits, et, sur ce festin, il tombe mourant, ivre de volupté, de tendresse et d'horreur.

Eh bien, dit Alfred de Musset, tels sont aussi les festins que les poètes servent au public :

Poète, c'est ainsi que font les grands poètes.
Ils laissent s'égayer ceux qui vivent un temps,
Mais les festins humains qu'ils servent à leurs fêtes
Ressemblent la plupart à ceux des pélicans ;
Quand ils parlent ainsi d'espérances trompées,
De tristesse et d'oubli, d'amour et de malheur,
Ce n'est pas un concert à dilater le cœur.
Leurs déclamations sont comme des épées :
Elles tracent dans l'air un cercle éblouissant,
Mais il y pend toujours quelque goutte de sang.

C'est de même ce qu'il faut comprendre dans les vers qu'Alfred de Musset adresse à la Malibran. Cette cantatrice, Mme Malibran, ne faisait pas comme font bien d'autres, qui restent insensibles aux passions qu'elles expriment dans leurs chants ; elle se mettait elle-même dans son chant, et elle est morte, d'après le poète, de s'être ainsi dépensée, d'avoir donné son âme, sa vie au public.

Ainsi, la poésie est dans le sentiment. Alfred de Musset va plus loin et il prétend que la poésie est tout entière dans le sentiment. Il fait bon marché des qualités d'expression, du style, de la forme ; il n'y veut voir autre chose que des procédés factices ; il se moque de ceux qu'il voit " rimer à tour de bras, rabauder l'oripeau qu'on appelle antithèse" ; et à ceux qui possèdent cet art, ces procédés, il refuse le beau nom de poète :

Grand homme si l'on veut, mais poète, non pas.

Non seulement la poésie tout entière réside dans le sentiment, mais Alfred de Musset veut que le sentiment soit encore la base de la critique. C'est là le vers fameux :

Vive le mélodrame où Margot a pleuré.

Mais ici je n'ai pas besoin d'insister pour vous montrer tout ce qu'il y a de puéril dans une pareille théorie. Margot, la fille du peuple, l'ouvrière ou la grisette, est un très médiocre critique littéraire. Margot aime en effet le mélodrame et le préfère au drame. En fait de pathétique, elle aime le plus gros, et en fait de poésie, elle ne connaît

guère que la poésie des romances, à laquelle nous ajouterons, si vous le voulez, le lyrisme des chansons de café-concert.

Voilà jusqu'où va Alfred de Musset. Vous voyez que sa théorie, poussée si loin, est tout à fait insoutenable. Mais elle n'en est que plus significative et elle nous fait mieux comprendre ce que pense Musset de son art. La poésie toute personnelle, la poésie où l'on se met soi-même, tout soi-même et rien que soi-même, voilà la poésie telle que la comprend Alfred de Musset. La poésie n'est autre chose que la traduction de ce qu'on a dans le cœur.

Reste donc à savoir ce qu'Alfred de Musset avait dans le cœur, reste à savoir quelle est cette conception qu'il se faisait de la vie.

La conception qu'Alfred de Musset se fait de la vie, oh ! c'est très simple. Alfred de Musset pense que dans la vie il n'y a que l'amour. On vit pour aimer, et voilà. Vous voyez que ce n'est pas très compliqué. Mais Alfred de Musset l'a répété sous toutes sortes de formes, en cent manières ; il a, pour ainsi dire, le culte de l'amour, et c'est pourquoi il célèbre ceux et celles qui en ont été les victimes, les héros, les héroïnes. Ainsi, Manon Lescaut a été perverse, a été coupable, mais elle a aimé et c'est pourquoi Alfred de Musset s'écrie

> Ah ! folle que tu es, comme je t'aimerais
> Demain, si tu vivais !

Et c'est pourquoi encore il célèbre don Juan. Don Juan c'est, comme vous le savez, la personnification de l'amour, ou de la poursuite de l'amour.

Alfred de Musset le magnifie, il le représente comme un chercheur d'idéal, et c'est parce que cet idéal lui échappe sans cesse et qu'il ne peut pas renoncer à le poursuivre qu'il passe par toutes sortes d'expériences où il laisse sa beauté, son génie et sa dignité.

L'amour ainsi compris, c'est une sorte de sombre passion, apporteuse de plus de souffrances que de joies. C'est un mal sacré. La vie qui a reconnu pour son maître un pareil amour en subit la tyrannie et elle est en proie à une sorte de fléau. C'est bien ainsi qu'Alfred de Musset conçoit l'amour, et dès ses premiers vers, dès le temps où il ne pouvait avoir des tourments de l'amour qu'une divination lointaine, il le salue comme une sorte de divinité redoutable :

Amour, fléau du monde, exécrable folie,
Toi qu'un lien si fragile à la volupté lie,
Quand par tant d'autres liens tu tiens à la douleur....

Mesdames et Messieurs, les tourments de l'amour, quand on y songe, on se les représente toujours sous la forme de l'infidélité, des serments violés. Et, à coup sûr, il est triste de voir tromper la confiance qu'on avait dans autrui. Mais il y a quelque chose de plus triste encore et, en amour comme ailleurs, les pires souffrances ce sont celles qui viennent de nous-mêmes et du sentiment de notre indignité. Car cet amour, auquel on demande tant de bonheur, pour qu'il remplisse la plénitude de bonheur que nous en attendons, il faut qu'il soit à base d'honnêteté, de confiance et de vertu ; mais

l'amour tel que le conçoit Alfred de Musset est à base de plaisir. Le plaisir s'émousse ; il faut, pour le raviver, le renouveler à chacune de ses expériences nouvelles. On éprouve qu'on est abaissé, qu'on a subi une sorte de dégradation, et alors, de cette série de chutes successives, il s'élève une amertume qui est l'amertume de la débauche. La débauche, Alfred de Musset en a senti de très bonne heure le venin "sous sa mamelle gauche," et c'est elle qui plus tard va faire pour lui de l'amour je ne sais quel filtre empoisonné.

D'après ce que je viens de vous dire, vous voyez que chez Alfred de Musset tout s'orientait, se combinait de façon qu'il éprouvât une grande passion et, une fois qu'il aurait éprouvé cette grande passion, qu'il y appartînt tout entier, qu'il fût contre elle sans défense. Et, en effet, d'où aurait pu venir à Alfred de Musset le pouvoir d'y résister ? Il ne pouvait pas le trouver en lui-même, puisque je vous ai montré en lui une nature capricieuse et faible. Il ne peut pas le trouver dans le sentiment de son art, puisque son art, il le fait consister justement à exprimer ce qui est en lui. Il ne peut le trouver davantage dans aucune croyance, puisque nous avons vu qu'il y a chez lui une sorte de scepticisme foncier. C'est donc que, lorsque viendra la passion, elle sera sur l'âme, sur le cœur de Musset souveraine maîtresse. Et c'est, en effet, ce qui est arrivé.

La passion, dans la vie d'Alfred de Musset, s'est appelée George Sand. Vous savez quelles ont été les relations de George Sand et d'Alfred de Musset :

on ne vous en a laissé rien ignorer. Nous voudrions oublier tous les détails qu'on a donnés et nous souvenir seulement que, à la suite de cette grande épreuve de sa vie, Alfred de Musset a écrit les très beaux vers que l'on trouve dans *les Nuits* et dans *les Souvenirs.*

Quel est le caractère de ces pièces qui terminent la carrière poétique d'Alfred de Musset ? Mesdames et Messieurs, ce que l'on n'a peut-être pas assez remarqué, c'est le caractère de tristesse profonde, de morne désolation qu'on trouve dans ces vers. Les images qui s'y présentent à l'esprit de Musset ne sont que des images douloureuses. C'est celle, par exemple, du pélican, que je vous rappelais tout à l'heure ; ou bien il compare son âme desséchée, son âme entièrement ruinée, à cette chaumière du paysan qui vient de brûler et dont il ne retrouve plus que les ruines ; ou bien c'est encore, dans *la Nuit de décembre,* cette vision du jeune homme vêtu de noir qui lui ressemble comme un frère :

Du temps que j'étais écolier,
Je restais un soir à veiller
Dans notre salle solitaire.
Devant ma table vint s'asseoir
Un pauvre enfant vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Son visage était triste et beau :
A la lueur de mon flambeau,
Dans mon livre ouvert il vint lire.
Il pencha son front sur ma main,
Et resta jusqu'au lendemain,
Pensif, avec un doux sourire.

Comme j'allais avoir quinze ans,
Je marchais un jour, à pas lents,
Dans un bois, sur une bruyère.
Au pied d'un arbre vint s'asseoir
Un jeune homme vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Je lui demandai mon chemin ;
Il tenait un luth d'une main,
De l'autre un bouquet d'églantine.
Il me fit un salut d'ami,
Et, se détournant à demi,
Me montra du doigt la colline.

A l'âge où l'on croit à l'amour,
J'étais seul dans ma chambre un jour,
Pleurant ma première misère.
Au coin de mon feu vint s'asseoir
Un étranger vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Il était morne et soucieux ;
D'une main il montrait les cieux,
Et de l'autre il tenait un glaive.
De ma peine il semblait souffrir,
Mais il ne poussa qu'un soupir,
Et s'évanouit comme un rêve.

A l'âge où l'on est libertin,
Pour boire un toast en un festin,
Un jour je soulevai mon verre.
En face de moi vint s'asseoir
Un convive vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Il secouait sous son manteau
Un haillon de pourpre en lambeau.
Sur sa tête un myrte stérile,
Son bras maigre cherchait le mien,
Et mon verre, en touchant le sien,
Se brisa dans ma main débile.

Un an après, il était nuit,
J'étais à genoux près du lit
Où venait de mourir mon père.
Au chevet du lit vint s'asseoir
Un orphelin vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère.

Ses yeux étaient noyés de pleurs ;
Comme les anges de douleurs,
Il était couronné d'épine ;
Son luth à terre était gisant,
Sa pourpre, de couleur de sang,
Et son glaive, dans sa poitrine.

Je m'en suis si bien souvenu
Que je l'ai toujours reconnu
A tous les instants de ma vie.
C'est une étrange vision,
Et cependant, ange ou démon,
J'ai vu partout cette ombre amie.

Et cette ombre dont nous parle ici Alfred de Musset, ce n'est pas seulement une vision, ou plutôt ce n'est pas seulement une fiction, mais Musset l'a vue réellement ; c'est une sorte de cauchemar auquel il a été en proie, c'est sa tristesse, c'est lui-même qui s'est apparu, qui a pris forme et corps devant lui.

Ou encore, ces vers d'Alfred de Musset à cette époque, ce sont les vers qui commencent ainsi :

J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaieté,
J'ai perdu jusqu'à la fierté
Qui faisait croire à mon génie.

Cette note profondément douloureuse est la dernière qui retentisse dans l'œuvre d'Alfred de Musset.

Et vous voyez maintenant quel est le dessein général de son œuvre. Musset a commencé par la gaieté, l'esprit, l'insouciance; il a terminé par les accents les plus mornes, les plus désespérés qu'il y ait dans notre poésie. Il a voulu s'abandonner au caprice tout seul, à la passion toute seule, et de là est venu ce caractère désespéré de la fin de son œuvre. C'est là ce qui marque la place qui appartient à Alfred de Musset dans l'histoire de notre poésie romantique. Alfred de Musset n'a mis dans ses vers, en effet, que lui-même, et de lui-même il n'a voulu engager dans ses vers absolument que ses désirs, absolument que ses passions. C'est ce qui fait que l'inspiration d'Alfred de Musset est souvent profonde, mais qu'elle est étroite, et nous n'y trouvons pas le grand et large caractère que nous trouvions chez un Lamartine ou même chez un Victor Hugo. Alfred de Musset n'est pas l'écrivain qu'on prend lorsqu'on veut trouver, exprimer quelques-unes de ces grandes idées, quelques-uns de ces nobles sentiments auxquels se rattache sans cesse l'humanité; ces grandes idées, ces grands sentiments, c'est chez d'autres qu'il faut aller les chercher; et chez Alfred de Musset,—il faut en être bien prévenu,—ce qu'on peut trouver, ce qu'on trouvera dans son œuvre et dans la partie de son œuvre même la plus profonde, c'est uniquement la tristesse désespérée d'une âme qui s'abandonne tout entière aux suggestions de l'instinct, aux ravages de la passion.

Quatrième Conférence. — 15 avril 1898.

ALFRED DE VIGNY, THÉOPHILE GAUTIER, LECONTE DE LISLE, VICTOR HUGO APRÈS 1852.

Messeigneurs, Mesdames, Messieurs,



ALFRED DE VIGNY.

Les trois poètes dont je vous ai entretenus jusqu'ici sont les principaux représentants de notre poésie romantique. Le principe de cette poésie, nous l'avons vu exprimé d'une façon extrême, absolue, poussée jusqu'à ses extrêmes limites, par Alfred de Musset. Mais, chez les uns ou chez les autres, ce principe est toujours le même; ce principe, c'est celui de la poésie personnelle, à savoir que le poète doit se mettre lui-même dans son œuvre et entretenir le public de ses émotions, des événements de sa sensibilité, de ses joies et de ses douleurs.

Cette poésie personnelle date du XIXe siècle, elle est quelque chose de tout à fait nouveau. Dans l'époque classique, il était entendu que l'écrivain ne doit pas parler de lui-même. Au XVIIe siècle, vous savez ce qu'on dit ; on dit : le moi est haïssable. Eh bien, nous avons changé tout cela, et depuis le temps de Jean-Jacques Rousseau on a trouvé au contraire que le moi était très agréable ; et les écrivains, persuadés que le moi est aussi intéressant pour les autres que pour nous-mêmes, n'ont cessé d'en entretenir leurs lecteurs. C'est depuis ce temps-là que tous les écrivains écrivent leurs mémoires et qu'on publie ses mémoires, ses souvenirs, ses confidences, ses confessions, l'histoire de sa vie, etc.

Ce que je voudrais vous montrer aujourd'hui, c'est comment, vers le milieu de ce siècle, il s'est fait une réaction, dans la poésie française, contre ce système de l'étalage de la personnalité, et comment la poésie, qui avait commencé par être personnelle, est devenue, au contraire, impersonnelle ; comment la poésie romantique s'est transformée, pour devenir la poésie parnassienne.

Déjà, dès le temps du romantisme, il s'en faut que tous les poètes n'eussent trouvé rien de plus intéressant à mettre dans leurs vers que les épisodes de leur propre sensibilité, et, très peu de temps après les *Méditations* de Lamartine, il paraissait un recueil de vers d'un poète qui est l'un de nos plus grands, d'Alfred de Vigny.

Quelle est donc, dans l'histoire de notre poésie au XIXe siècle, la part d'Alfred de Vigny ? Ce qui lui

appartient en propre, ce qu'il représente, c'est ceci : une tentative pour donner à la France une poésie philosophique, pour allier ces deux choses : la poésie, d'une part et la philosophie, d'autre part. La tentative était très difficile et très périlleuse ; car, songez-y, la poésie et la philosophie, si on se demande ce que c'est au fond, il semble bien que ce soient deux ennemies, deux antagonistes, et que la définition de l'une soit l'exclusion de la définition de l'autre.

Qu'est-ce que c'est, en effet, que la poésie ? La poésie, c'est quelque chose de concret ; il n'y a pas de poésie sans images. Mais la philosophie, c'est l'idée pure, c'est quelque chose d'abstrait. De sorte que la poésie et la philosophie, la poésie philosophique, il semble bien que ce soit l'alliance du concret et de l'abstrait, c'est-à-dire, si vous le voulez, de l'eau et du feu. Et, en effet, la plupart du temps, lorsqu'on a voulu exprimer des idées philosophiques en vers, on a exprimé des idées philosophiques, mais on n'a pas fait des vers ; on a fait de la prose rimée, de la poésie mnémotechnique. L'idéal, en ce sens, c'est *la Géométrie mise en vers*. Vous connaissez quelques-uns des théorèmes de cette *Géométrie mise en vers ;* par exemple :

> Le carré de l'hypoténuse
> Est égal, si je ne m'abuse...

....Au fait, je ne sais plus du tout à quoi est égal le carré de l'hypoténuse.

Aussi, la poésie philosophique, dans tous les pays, n'a-t-elle donné lieu qu'à un nombre d'œuvres fort

restreint. Chez les Grecs, il y a ce que l'on appelle les *vers dorés*, chez les Romains, le poème de Lucrèce; et en France, je crois bien que les vers d'Alfred de Vigny sont le premier modèle que nous en ayons, modèle resté presque unique.

Comment procède Alfred de Vigny? Alfred de Vigny essaie de trouver, pour une conception abstraite, un beau symbole qui exprime cette conception abstraite, mais qui a par lui-même son intérêt, son développement, sa vie indépendante. Je prends un exemple, je l'emprunte au poème d'*Éloa,* qui est un des premiers en date d'Alfred de Vigny et l'un de ceux sur qui repose le plus sûrement sa réputation. L'idée philosophique est la suivante, à savoir que la pitié est vertu souveraine, mais que la pitié doit s'appliquer à la forme de la souffrance qui est vraiment la plus douloureuse. Or, quelle est la forme de la souffrance qui mérite le plus de nous apitoyer? Il y en a une qui est plus grave, plus terrible que la souffrance physique: c'est la souffrance morale. Le péché est quelque chose de pire que la souffrance qui ne nous torture que dans notre chair. Par conséquent, la pitié doit s'adresser au pécheur; et au pécheur, pourquoi? justement parce qu'il est le pécheur. On doit l'aimer, parce qu'il fait mal, parce qu'il est plus à plaindre, à la fin, qu'un autre. Voilà l'idée, voici comment Alfred de Vigny va la traduire,—c'est un beau symbole. Il imagine que lorsque le Christ fut appelé auprès de Lazare, il laissa dans son chemin tomber une larme. Cette larme fut recueillie par les séraphins dans une

urne d'albâtre et portée jusqu'au pied du trône de Dieu le Père. Dieu le Père, d'un regard, anima cette larme, et cette larme du Christ devint Éloa, la sœur des anges. Au ciel, au paradis, Éloa entendit parler de l'ange déchu et elle prit pitié de lui ; elle l'aima, justement parce qu'il était déchu. Elle voulut le voir, le connaître, descendit jusque dans l'empire de l'ange déchu et se perdit avec lui. Voilà le symbole à côté de l'idée ; voilà l'idée abstraite, traduite sous une forme concrète, matérielle et vivante.

Alfred de Vigny s'est servi de ce procédé pour mettre en vers, dans une série de pièces composant le recueil des *Destinées*, une philosophie qui lui est particulière. Cette philosophie est l'une des plus sombres, l'une des plus tristes qui se puissent imaginer. Mais vous allez voir en quoi cette tristesse de l'œuvre d'Alfred de Vigny diffère, par exemple, de la tristesse que nous notions hier dans l'œuvre d'Alfred de Musset.

Alfred de Musset était triste. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'il avait souffert personnellement, en lui-même, pour lui-même. Chez Alfred de Vigny, la tristesse est le résultat, la conclusion d'un raisonnement ; c'est un sytème qui, d'après Alfred de Vigny, vaut non pas pour le poète, lui seul, mais pour tous les hommes. Ce système est éminemment un système pessimiste. Vigny pense que nous sommes malheureux ; malheureux, non par suite de tel accident particulier, mais malheureux d'une façon générale, par une nécessité de notre condition, parce que nous sommes des hommes. Nous sommes malheureux, condamnés au malheur ; et non seu-

lement nous avons à souffrir, mais personne ne nous prend en pitié. A qui nous adresser ? Nous adresser à la nature ? compter sur la sensibilité de la nature ? voir dans la nature une consolatrice, comme faisait Lamartine ou comme faisait Hugo ? Mais la nature, c'est justement l'insensibilité. La nature est insensible, et Vigny, dans une pièce fameuse, suppose qu'il s'adresse à la nature, qu'il lui demande si elle sympathise avec l'homme, et voici ce que lui répond cette nature :

> Elle me dit : " Je suis l'impassible théâtre
> Que ne peut remuer le pied de ses acteurs ;
> ....
> Je n'entends ni vos cris ni vos soupirs ; à peine
> Je sens passer sur moi la comédie humaine
> Qui cherche en vain au ciel ses muets spectateurs.
>
> " Je roule avec dédain, sans voir et sans entendre,
> A côté des fourmis, les populations ;
> Je ne distingue pas leur terrier de leur cendre,
> J'ignore, en les portant, les noms des nations.
> On me dit une mère, et je suis une tombe."

Ainsi, l'homme est seul au milieu de cette nature insensible qui est pour lui une tombe ; non pas une mère, mais une marâtre. Ce mal, ce malheur, cette souffrance, c'est Dieu même qui l'y a condamné. Alors, où se tourner ? de quel côté espérer un soulagement ? Et si nous sommes condamnés ainsi au malheur, qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire ? quelle sera notre règle de conduite ?

Notre règle de conduite, eh bien, ce sera de souffrir, non pas avec résignation, mais avec une

sorte de silence stoïque. Nous ne nous plaindrons même pas, nous ne réclamerons même pas, nous subirons ; nous subirons avec une sorte de dédain et de mépris hautain. C'est là la conclusion morale du système philosophique d'Alfred de Vigny. Et, fidèle à son procédé de traduction poétique, voici par quel symbole ingénieux il le traduit : il suppose, dans une pièce intitulée *la Mort du loup*, que des chasseurs ont frappé à mort un loup et que le loup ne s'est pas défendu. Seulement, il est resté là, il a tenu tête aux chasseurs jusqu'à ce que la louve et ses petits eussent eu le temps de se mettre en sûreté. Alors, il s'est affaissé, il est tombé, il est mort. Et il semble au poète que ce loup, ce loup héroïque, ce loup philosophe a donné une leçon à l'homme.

J'ai reposé mon front sur mon fusil sans poudre,
Me prenant à penser, et n'ai pu me résoudre
A poursuivre sa louve et ses fils, qui, tous trois,
Avaient voulu l'attendre, et, comme je le crois,
Sans ses deux louveteaux, la belle et sombre veuve
Ne l'eût pas laissé seul subir la grande épreuve ;
Mais son devoir était de les sauver, afin
De pouvoir leur apprendre à bien souffrir la faim,
A ne jamais entrer dans le pacte des villes
Que l'homme a fait avec les animaux serviles
Qui chassent devant lui, pour avoir le coucher,
Les premiers possesseurs du bois et du rocher.

Hélas ! ai-je pensé, malgré ce grand nom d'hommes,
Que j'ai honte de nous, débiles que nous sommes !
Comment on doit quitter la vie et tous ses maux,
C'est vous qui le savez, sublimes animaux !
A voir ce que l'on fut sur terre et ce qu'on laisse,
Seul, le silence est grand ; tout le reste est faiblesse.

6

—Ah ! je t'ai bien compris, sauvage voyageur,
Et ton dernier regard m'est allé jusqu'au cœur !
Il disait : " Si tu peux, fais que ton âme arrive,
A force de rester studieuse et pensive,
Jusqu'à ce haut degré de stoïque fierté
Où, naissant dans les bois, j'ai tout d'abord monté.
Gémir, pleurer, prier, est également lâche.
Fais énergiquement ta longue et lourde tâche
Dans la voie où le sort a voulu t'appeler,
Puis, après, comme moi, souffre et meurs sans parler."

Je n'ai pas besoin de vous montrer ce qu'il y a de noblesse dans ce stoïcisme farouche.

Ajoutez que si Alfred de Vigny note cette misère de la condition humaine, il ne se contente pas de nous la signaler, et il passe à ce qui vaut mieux que la constatation de la misère, à savoir, la pitié pour cette misère. Alfred de Vigny, en voyant ce que nous souffrons et comme nous sommes condamnés à souffrir, à défaut d'autre chose, nous prend en pitié, et il a écrit un des plus beaux vers qui soient dans notre langue, justement sur cette sympathie que la souffrance doit inspirer. C'est Vigny qui a écrit :

J'aime la majesté des souffrances humaines.

La majesté des souffrances humaines ! Vous voyez combien l'expression est belle. Car, sans doute, ce qui fait la grandeur de l'homme, c'est qu'il souffre et c'est qu'il mérite par la souffrance.

Il y a, à coup sûr, une doctrine supérieure à celle de Vigny, c'est celle qui consiste, au lieu d'un stoïcisme farouche, à nous donner la confiance dans

une volonté suprême et la résignation à ses ordres : mais cette doctrine-là, c'est celle qu'enseigne la religion, et comme philosophie humaine, purement humaine, je crois qu'il y en a peu qui montrent autant de vigueur, autant de noblesse que celle que Vigny a exprimée dans ses *Destinées*.

Voilà donc, dans Alfred de Vigny, un poète philosophe, un poète penseur, un poète qui met, comme vous le voyez, dans ses vers autre chose que son histoire à lui-même, qui y met ses réflexions sur l'ordre du monde, ses idées sur l'ensemble de notre destinée.

Nous ne trouvons rien d'aussi profond en nous occupant de Théophile Gautier. Si Alfred de Vigny a eu des idées, c'est justement d'idées qu'a le plus manqué Théophile Gautier, qu'on appelait "le bon Théo."

Le bon Théo, le bon Théophile Gautier, un excellent homme, en effet, avait débuté dans les rangs du romantisme, et pas comme un guerrier obscur ; mais il y avait débuté au premier rang, parmi les lutteurs... comment dire ?.... les plus flamboyants. C'était lui qui, vous le savez, s'était fait remarquer ce fameux soir, le soir de la première de *Hernani*.

Vous connaissez l'histoire de cette bataille littéraire, restée fameuse et restée presque unique. Il s'agissait, pour les romantiques, de s'emparer du théâtre, sur lequel les classiques étaient jusque-là restés les maîtres incontestés. On savait qu'une bataille décisive serait livrée et, pour cette bataille Victor Hugo, en bon général d'armée qui ne remet

rien au hasard, avait pris toutes ses précautions. Dès l'après-midi, à deux heures, trois cents jeunes gens, trois cents Spartiates, avaient occupé les positions de la Comédie-Française. Notez ! pour une représentation qui devait commencer à huit heures du soir ! Cela faisait six heures d'attente. Pendant ces six heures, on passa le temps comme on put ; on chanta, on mangea, et lorsque la rampe commença à s'allumer, le lustre à descendre, la salle à se remplir, les deux partis purent s'observer, se mesurer et se reconnaître. C'était très facile de se reconnaître, entre classiques d'un côté et romantiques de l'autre. Il y avait différence déjà dans l'attitude extérieure. Par exemple, les classiques portaient le menton rasé, parce que, à cette époque-là, ce n'était pas convenable de porter sa barbe ; les romantiques, au contraire, avaient des barbes fluviales. Les classiques étaient généralement âgés ; les romantiques étaient jeunes. Les classiques, de même qu'ils ne portaient pas leur barbe, généralement ne portaient pas non plus de cheveux —ce n'était pas mauvaise volonté, mais c'était pour une autre cause ;—les romantiques avaient des crinières mérovingiennes. Les classiques portaient des vêtements corrects, et les romantiques avaient laissé à leur fantaisie, en fait d'habillement, toute sa liberté, ou plutôt, je crois qu'ils avaient travaillé cette fantaisie.

Et notamment, on apercevait au balcon, sous des cheveux rutilants, qui sortaient d'un chapeau de feutre à larges bords plats, un jeune homme à la face pâle et dont la longue barbe descendait sur un

pourpoint cramoisi. C'était Théophile Gautier. Et il est resté, depuis ce temps, célèbre sous le nom de " l'homme au gilet rouge de la première représentation de *Hernani*."

Eh bien, ce romantique des temps héroïques, qui a si bien lutté pour Victor Hugo, est un de ceux qui ont contribué à modifier l'esthétique de notre poésie française, et à amener cette poésie à des conceptions assez différentes de celles de Victor Hugo.



THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

Je vous ai dit que Théophile Gautier n'a guère d'idées. Il n'a pas beaucoup plus de sentiments. Mais il a autre chose : il a une vision de l'extérieur, plus nette, plus précise que personne ne l'avait eue avant lui. Théophile Gautier s'est défini lui-même par certains aphorismes qui ont forme de boutades. Ainsi, Théophile Gautier dit que son mérite à lui, c'est d'être " un homme pour qui le monde extérieur existe." Eh bien, cela a l'air paradoxal : un homme pour qui le monde extérieur existe. Est-ce que le monde extérieur n'existe pas pour tous les hommes ? Nous n'avons qu'à faire quelques pas, et il nous heurte. Nous nous apercevons tous que le monde

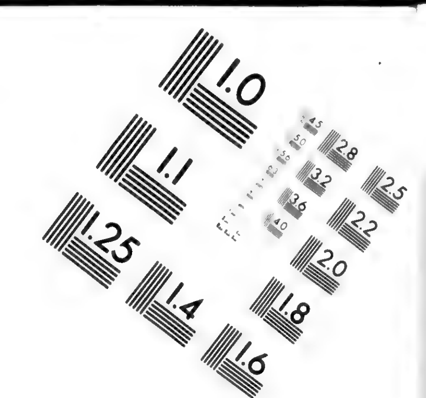
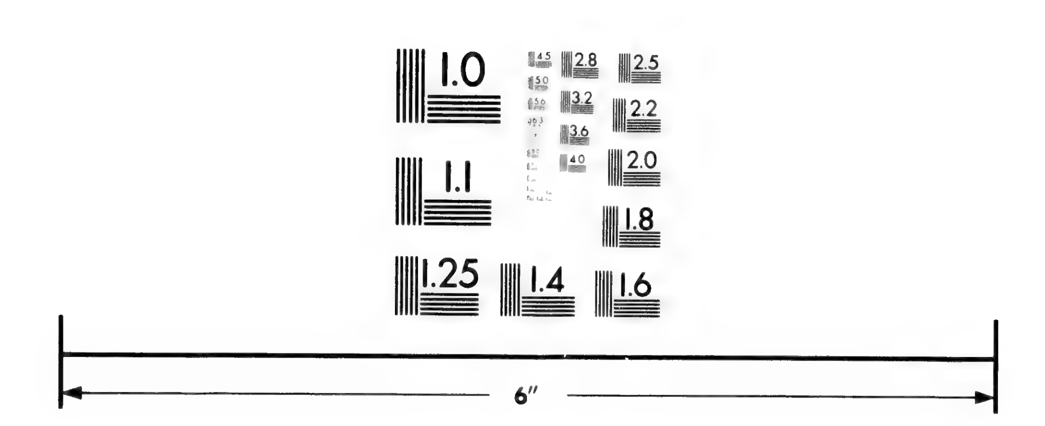


IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)





extérieur existe. Si cependant vous creusez un peu cette idée, vous verrez qu'elle est pleine de sens. Il y a beaucoup de gens pour qui le monde extérieur n'existe pas. Il y a des gens qui sont ainsi. Ils entrent dans une chambre : demandez-leur ensuite de quelle couleur était le papier, ils ne sauront pas vous le dire. Ce sont des gens pour qui le monde extérieur n'existe pas. Il y a fort peu de gens qui, au sortir d'un spectacle extérieur, sont capables de vous le décrire avec précision. De même, Théophile Gautier dit : " Moi, ce qui fait ma supériorité, le voici : je suis très fort, j'amène cinq cents au dynamomètre, et je fais des métaphores qui se suivent."

Eh bien, si Théophile Gautier, en frappant sur la tête de turc dans les foires, faisait monter tout en haut le système, il se peut qu'il en tire vanité ; mais ce qui nous importe, c'est ceci : c'est qu'il fait des métaphores qui se suivent. Et, notez-le, chez Lamartine, les métaphores ne se suivent pas toujours. Savez-vous pourquoi ? Parce que parfois, c'était lui qui les commençait, mais c'était un autre qui les achevait.

Lamartine était très insoucieux de ses écrits ; et il lui arrive, par exemple, de porter le manuscrit de son poème de *Jocelyn* chez le libraire, et de lui dire : " Il y a un certain nombre de vers qui ne sont pas terminés, mais vous trouverez toujours bien quelqu'un pour les terminer." En sorte qu'il y a certains hémistiches de *Jocelyn* qui ne sont pas de Lamartine, mais qui sont d'un commis de librairie quelconque. Espérons au moins que ce ne sont pas ceux-là que nous admirons le plus.

Je vous montrerais bien des négligences chez Alfred de Musset ; il y en a même chez Victor Hugo, qui cependant, pour le style, a plus de soin que les autres. Mais, d'après ce que je viens de vous montrer, vous voyez que, pour Théophile Gautier, d'une part, le monde extérieur existe, d'autre part, il fait des métaphores qui se suivent. Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire ? Cela veut dire qu'il est sensible aux choses, aux objets, à l'extérieur et que, dans la façon dont il rend l'extérieur, il s'occupe plus qu'un autre de la précision. Il est, en vers, un peintre. Il l'avait été en réalité ; il avait commencé par l'être dans un atelier de peinture. C'est un peintre manqué qui a fait en vers un peintre excellent. C'est un peintre, et vous savez que, d'habitude, sa propre pratique on l'érige en théorie ; avec ses qualités à soi on fait des maximes. Théophile Gautier était un bon peintre en vers ; c'est pourquoi il a déclaré qu'il fallait peindre en vers et que la poésie doit être une rivale de la peinture ; rivale de la peinture, et aussi de la sculpture, et aussi de la gravure sur médailles, et aussi des émaux, et aussi des camées. C'est le titre que porte son principal recueil : *Émaux et camées.* Vous voyez comme ce titre est différent de *Méditations* ou même de *Feuilles d'automne. Émaux et camées*, le poète s'y donne pour un rival du graveur. Le style, d'après lui, doit être plastique, et cette théorie même est celle de Théophile Gautier : la théorie du style plastique, la théorie d'après laquelle le poète doit rivaliser avec le peintre et le sculpteur.

Cette théorie, je n'ai pas besoin de vous le dire, prise sous une forme aussi absolue, est une théorie fausse. On aura beau faire, la plume ne sera jamais vraiment un pinceau. On aura beau faire, on n'obtiendra pas avec la plume les mêmes effets qu'avec le ciseau. Et si avec la plume on doit peindre, c'est condamner la poésie à une infériorité certaine, parce que jamais, avec les vers les plus pittoresques et les plus évocateurs, on n'arrivera à produire un effet aussi saisissant, aussi intense qu'avec la vision même de l'objet, que nous devons soit au tableau, soit à la statue. Faire de la poésie la rivale de la peinture et de la sculpture, c'est la condamner d'avance à être toujours battue.

De même que Théophile Gautier a été l'inventeur de la théorie du style plastique, il est le premier qui ait recommandé ce que l'on appelle la théorie de l'art pour l'art. La théorie de l'art pour l'art, voici à peu près ce que cela veut dire. Cela veut dire que l'artiste doit se désintéresser de toutes les choses de son temps, il doit être indifférent à ce qui préoccupe les autres hommes. C'était l'avis de Théophile Gautier. Il disait : " Rien ne sert à rien, et d'abord, il n'y a rien ; cependant tout arrive, mais cela est bien indifférent." Etre indifférent à toute chose, être indifférent à la vie politique, indifférent à la morale, indifférent au progrès, indifférent à tout ce qui préoccupe les autres hommes, et être sensible seulement à son art, aux choses de son art. Mais alors, vous vous demandez : dans cet art où on ne met rien de ce qui préoccupe les autres hommes, qu'est-ce qu'on met ? Dans la théorie de

l'art pour l'art, on arrive, en effet, à faire le vide en art, et à prendre pour ce qui est l'art ce qui en est seulement la forme extérieure, l'appparence.

Vous voyez que, comme théoricien, Théophile Gautier est allé trop loin, et c'est que, je crois, il avait le goût du paradoxe. Mais, quoi qu'il en soit, son œuvre a été efficace ; elle a été utile et elle a ramené les écrivains, les poètes, à avoir un souci plus complet de leur métier, à faire attention davantage aux questions de forme, à donner à l'expression un souci sévère qu'ils n'avaient pas jusque-là.



LECONTE DE LISLE.

C'est en 1866 que parut, chez un éditeur inconnu jusque-là, un recueil de vers intitulé *le Parnasse contemporain*. L'éditeur est depuis devenu fort célèbre : c'est l'éditeur Lemerre ; et quelques-uns des Parnassiens sont arrivés à une grande réputation. Le chef de l'école parnassienne, c'est Leconte de Lisle, et vous allez voir comment Leconte de Lisle prend place justement à l'opposé des théories qui avaient été les théories romantiques. Leconte de Lisle pose en principe que le premier devoir du poète, c'est d'être impersonnel. Il a horreur de ce qu'il y a d'impudique, pourrait-on dire, dans cette façon d'aller faire les honneurs de soi-même à tout

le monde, d'aller se raconter à tout venant, de se traîner sur la scène et d'y étaler ce qui devrait être le plus intime, ce qu'on devrait justement garder pour soi. Cette façon dont les poètes romantiques se livraient ainsi à la foule, lui paraît justement l'analogue du métier de comédien, pris dans le sens le plus défavorable, du métier d'histrion. C'est ce qu'il indique dans un très beau sonnet, intitulé justement *les Montreurs*, c'est-à-dire dirigé contre ceux qui se montrent à tout le monde, qui font à n'importe qui les honneurs de leur sensibilité :

Tel qu'un morne animal, meurtri, plein de poussière,
La chaîne au cou, hurlant au chaud soleil d'été,
Promène qui voudra son cœur ensanglanté
Sur ton pavé cynique, ô plèbe carnassière :

Pour mettre un feu stérile en ton œil hébété,
Pour mendier ton rire ou ta pitié grossière,
Déchire qui voudra la robe de lumière
De la pudeur divine et de la volupté.

Dans mon orgueil muet, dans ma tombe sans gloire,
Dussé-je m'engloutir pour l'éternité noire,
Je ne te vendrai pas mon ivresse ou mon mal.

Je ne livrerai pas ma vie à tes huées,
Je ne danserai pas sur ton tréteau banal,
Avec tes histrions et tes prostituées.

Voilà, contre la théorie de la poésie personnelle, la déclaration la plus vigoureuse, vous le voyez, qu'on puisse faire. Cependant, il ne faudrait pas adresser à Leconte de Lisle un reproche qu'on lui

a fait souvent, en confondant l'un avec l'autre deux mots très différents. Leconte de Lisle veut que la poésie soit impersonnelle, mais il ne prétend pas que le poète doive être impassible. Et c'est ce terme dont on s'est servi maintes fois contre Leconte de Lisle et son école. On leur a dit : " Vous êtes des impassibles." Bien, qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un poète qui est impassible ? Si un poète ne sent rien, c'est donc qu'il n'a rien à nous dire, il faut qu'il se taise. L'impassibilité, ce n'est pas la même chose que l'impersonnalité : on peut sentir très vivement, mais sentir, pour ainsi parler, d'une façon générale et sans rappeler, comme c'était le fait des romantiques, les incidents particuliers de sa biographie. C'est ce que vous allez bien voir dans une des pièces les plus significatives de Leconte de Lisle ; dans la belle pièce qui est intitulée *Midi*, vous allez voir les deux aspects du talent de Leconte de Lisle. D'une part, Leconte de Lisle est celui des écrivains du XIXe siècle qui a fait en France les vers les plus complets, comme rendu, comme expression, comme harmonie sonore ; c'est celui qui, dans ses descriptions, s'est rapproché davantage de l'objet lui-même, de la réalité ; et, d'autre part, Leconte de Lisle, tout en se soumettant à l'objet, tout en étant un descriptif exact et minutieux et tout en s'interdisant les vaines lamentations, est celui qui nous a fait le mieux comprendre l'espèce de désenchantement profond qui était dans son cœur. Voici la première partie de cette pièce de *Midi*, et vous

allez voir que c'est seulement une admirable description :

Midi, roi des étés, épandu sur la plaine,
Tombe en nappes d'argent des hauteurs du ciel bleu.
Tout se tait. L'air flamboie et brûle sans haleine ;
La terre est assoupie en sa robe de feu.

L'étendue est immense, et les champs n'ont point d'ombre,
Et la source est tarie où buvaient les troupeaux ;
La lointaine forêt, dont la lisière est sombre,
Dort là-bas, immobile, en un pesant repos.

Seuls, les grands blés mûris, tels qu'une mer dorée,
Se déroulent, au loin, dédaigneux du sommeil ;
Pacifiques enfants de la terre sacrée,
Ils épuisent sans peur la coupe du soleil.

Parfois, comme un soupir de leur âme brûlante,
Du sein des épis lourds qui murmurent entre eux,
Une ondulation majestueuse et lente
S'éveille, et va mourir à l'horizon poudreux.

Non loin, quelques bœufs blancs, couchés parmi les herbes,
Bavent avec lenteur sur leurs fanons épais,
Et suivent de leurs yeux languissants et superbes
Le songe intérieur qu'ils n'achèvent jamais.

Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait de tableau qui soit plus évocateur de choses vues. Ce mouvement qui s'éveille, cette ondulation lente dans les blés mûrs et ces bœufs qui bavent avec lenteur, vous voyez qu'ici l'expression, le terme, est aussi réaliste que possible, et il n'a rien de grossier, il n'a rien de bas ; au contraire, la façon dont se termine la strophe éveille chez nous une belle idée : cette idée que l'animal, lui aussi, est pour nous un frère, un frère, à

quelque degré qu'ait voulu la nature. Et, vous voyez, ici il n'y a pas autre chose qu'un tableau. Mais voici la fin de cette pièce, et vous allez voir que le caractère s'en modifie :

Homme, si, le cœur plein de joie ou d'amertume,
Tu passais vers midi dans les champs radieux,
Fuis ! la nature est vide et le soleil consume :
Rien n'est vivant ici, rien n'est triste ou joyeux.

Mais si, désabusé des larmes et du rire,
Altéré de l'oubli de ce monde agité,
Tu veux, ne sachant plus pardonner ou maudire,
Goûter une suprême et morne volupté,

Viens ! Le soleil te parle en paroles sublimes ;
Dans sa flamme implacable absorbe-toi sans fin ;
Et retourne à pas lents vers les cités infimes,
Le cœur trempé sept fois dans le néant divin.

Et par conséquent, vous le voyez, Leconte de Lisle n'était pas désintéressé, et quand tout à l'heure il décrivait pour nous cette nature qui souffre sous le soleil torride, c'était pour arriver à cette conclusion, à savoir, que, comme le pensait déjà Alfred de Vigny, la nature est mauvaise, la nature est notre ennemie et qu'il faut se réfugier dans une espèce de foi au néant.

Voilà ce qu'il y a au fond, dans cette œuvre désespérée de Leconte de Lisle. Mais, ici encore, ce dont Leconte de Lisle veut nous entretenir, ce n'est pas de lui et de ses souffrances personnelles, mais c'est de la condition de l'humanité.

Ses deux recueils de vers sont intitulés *Poèmes antiques*, *Poèmes barbares*. Dans les *Poèmes*

antiques, il s'est efforcé de ressusciter la civilisation antique, la religion grecque dans les *Poèmes barbares*, il s'est efforcé de nous donner une idée surtout de la civilisation orientale, des religions hindoues, des vieux mythes. Et, vous voyez, là-dedans, quel rapport y a-t-il entre les vieux mythes hindous et Leconte de Lisle, bibliothécaire du sénat et candidat à l'Académie française ? Voilà le départ absolu que le poète arrive à faire entre lui et son œuvre. C'est justement le terme extrême à l'autre bout du romantisme, c'est justement le contraire de ce que le romantisme avait voulu faire.

L'œuvre de Leconte de Lisle marque une espèce de séparation dans l'histoire de notre poésie au XIXe siècle. Cela est à tel point que cette œuvre de Leconte de Lisle a influé sur l'œuvre de Victor Hugo, et que le Victor Hugo que nous allons voir maintenant est un Victor Hugo transformé et très différent de celui dont je vous parlais l'autre jour.

L'autre jour, je vous ai parlé de Victor Hugo dans ses premiers recueils, à peu près jusque vers le temps de l'exil. Vous savez qu'au moment où se fonde chez nous le second empire, vers 1852, Victor Hugo ne veut pas rester en France ; il part en exil, il jure une haine implacable au nouveau régime, à celui qu'on appelle le second empire. Cet exil de Victor Hugo a eu une importance considérable, au point de vue de la transformation de son génie et au point de vue aussi de sa réputation. C'est à partir de ce moment que Victor Hugo a commencé à devenir pour les Français, non plus seulement un

très grand poète, mais une sorte de personnage mystérieux, légendaire et qui, peu à peu, tournait en idole. Je ne dis pas du tout que Victor Hugo l'ait fait exprès,—bien loin de là ; mais c'était un très grand artiste, et justement, l'artiste, inconsciemment, d'instinct, fait ce qui est le plus artistique. Et, notez-le, si Victor Hugo était resté à Paris, il ne pouvait pas devenir cette espèce d'idole. Enfin ! Victor Hugo, c'était un monsieur qu'on rencontrait dans les rues, sur l'impérial de l'omnibus. Il aimait beaucoup l'impérial de l'omnibus,—non pas parce que ça coûtait moins cher, mais parce que de là il dominait les rues de Paris, dont il aimait infiniment le spectacle. Eh bien, ce monsieur qu'on coudoie, c'est un monsieur comme nous. Mais supposez que le poète soit là-bas, en exil, dans un exil à demi volontaire, réfugié justement dans une île, dans une île où ses pieds sont battus par l'Océan, où son front, comme on le représente dans les vignettes d'alors, touche presque aux nuages ; il est entre la mer et le ciel, entre l'Océan et les nuages. Véritablement, ce n'est plus un homme comme nous : c'est une créature spéciale, et on ne va plus s'étonner si, au lieu de poèmes, ce sont quelquefois des oracles qu'il nous envoie.

D'une autre façon encore, cet exil a été infiniment profitable à Victor Hugo. Victor Hugo a vécu là dans le voisinage de l'Océan, et l'Océan a exercé certainement sur son imagination une influence très grande et très féconde. Le Victor Hugo de la fin, de la dernière manière, a une largeur, une abondance qu'on ne lui soupçonnait pas, même dans

ses plus belles pièces du début. Eh bien, grâce, d'une part, à l'exil, d'autre part, au courant nouveau qui pénétrait alors la poésie, Victor Hugo va pouvoir nous donner une œuvre que depuis longtemps attendait la poésie française, dans laquelle elle avait toujours échoué et dont elle commençait à désespérer : je veux dire une œuvre épique.

La poésie épique, la France, depuis le XVIe siècle, essayait de la retrouver. Au XVIe siècle, c'était Ronsard qui écrivait sa *Franciade,* un poème ennuyeux s'il en fut. Au XVIIe siècle, Chapelain écrivait *la Pucelle,* et il était, vous le savez, un très grand poète, tant que son poème n'était pas encore publié ; mais, du jour qu'il était publié, il ne fut plus qu'un poète très ridicule. Au XVIIIe siècle, c'est Voltaire qui écrit *la Henriade,* et certainement, Voltaire, qui avait d'autres qualités, manquait par excellence des qualités épiques. Si quelqu'un n'a pas eu la tête épique, c'est certainement Voltaire. Au début du XIXe siècle, Chateaubriand écrit *les Martyrs ;* et *les Martyrs* ont toutes sortes de qualités épiques ; par malheur, *les Martyrs* sont écrits en prose.

Et quelle était la raison qui faisait qu'on avait toujours échoué jusque-là ? Il y en avait peut-être d'autres, mais une de ces raisons était celle-ci : c'est qu'on s'était obstiné à faire un poème en douze ou en vingt-quatre chants, se suivant, avec invocation au début et conclusion à la fin, en continuant de suivre les exemples d'Homère ou de Virgile. Victor Hugo eut une idée de génie. Ce fut, au lieu de nous donner un poème se suivant du

début à la fin, ce pour quoi il faut, de la part du poète, un souffle puissant et de la part des lecteurs, beaucoup de patience et de résignation, au lieu de nous donner ainsi un poème épique tout d'un bloc, de nous donner des séries de fragments épiques. C'est justement ce que sera *la Légende des siècles.* Dans *la Légende des siècles,* Victor Hugo va s'efforcer de nous montrer successivement des tableaux des différentes époques de l'humanité, tableaux dont chacun mettra en relief un trait qui sera caractéristique de l'époque. Et nous allons voir ainsi se succéder l'époque primitive, patriarcale, les temps de la Bible ; nous verrons les temps anciens, nous verrons le moyen âge ; nous arriverons jusqu'à l'époque moderne ; plus loin que l'époque moderne, nous arriverons jusqu'à la fin du monde ; plus loin que la fin du monde, jusqu'au jugement dernier, et plus loin que le jugement dernier. C'est, vous le voyez, l'histoire complète de l'humanité qui se déroule dans cette série de tableaux. Je vous lirai un de ces fragments épiques, pour vous donner une idée du procédé de composition de Victor Hugo.

Je choisis la pièce intitulée *la Conscience,* qui est aussi bien une des plus belles :

Lorsqu'avec ses enfants vêtus de peaux de bêtes,
Echevelé, livide au milieu des tempêtes,
Caïn se fut enfui de devant Jéhovah,
Comme le soir tombait, l'homme sombre arriva
Au bas d'une montagne en une grande plaine ;
Sa femme fatiguée et ses fils hors d'haleine
Lui dirent : Couchons-nous sur la terre, et dormons.
Caïn, ne dormant pas, songeait aux pieds des monts.

Ayant levé la tête, au fond des cieux funèbres
Il vit un œil, tout grand ouvert dans les ténèbres,
Et qui le regardait dans l'ombre fixement.
—Je suis trop près, dit-il avec un tremblement.
Il réveilla ses fils dormant, sa femme lasse,
Et se remit à fuir, sinistre, dans l'espace.
Il marcha trente jours, il marcha trente nuits.
Il allait, muet, pâle et frémissant aux bruits,
Furtif, sans regarder derrière lui, sans trêve,
Sans repos, sans sommeil, il atteignit la grève
Des mers, dans le pays qui fut depuis Assur.
—Arrêtons-nous, dit-il, car cet asile est sûr.
Restons-y. Nous avons du monde atteint les bornes.—
Et, comme il s'asseyait, il vit dans les cieux mornes
L'œil à la même place, au fond de l'horizon.
Alors il tressaillit, en proie au noir frisson.
—Cachez-moi, cria-t-il; et le doigt sur la bouche,
Tous ses fils regardaient trembler l'aïeul farouche.
Caïn dit à Jabel, père de ceux qui vont
Sous des tentes de poil dans le désert profond :
—Etends de ce côté la toile de la tente.—
Et l'on développa la muraille flottante;
Et, quand on l'eut fixée avec des poids de plomb:
—Vous ne voyez plus rien? dit Tsilla, l'enfant blond,
La fille de ses fils, douce comme l'aurore;
Et Cain répondit :—Je vois cet œil encore!
Jubal, père de ceux qui passent dans les bourgs,
Soufflant dans des clairons et frappant des tambours,
Cria: Je saurai bien construire une barrière.—
Il fit un mur de bronze et mit Caïn derrière.
Et Caïn dit :—Cet œil me regarde toujours!
Hénoch dit :—Il faut faire une enceinte de tours,
Si terrible, que rien ne puisse approcher d'elle.
Bâtissons une ville avec sa citadelle.
Bâtissons une ville, et nous la fermerons.—
Alors Tubalcaïn, père des forgerons,
Construisit une ville énorme et surhumaine.
Pendant qu'il travaillait, ses frères, dans la plaine,

Chassaient les fils d'Enos et les nfants de Seth ;
Et l'on crevait les yeux à quiconque passait ;
Et, le soir, on lançait des flèches aux étoiles.
Le granit remplaça la tente aux murs de toile,
On lia chaque bloc avec des nœuds de fer,
Et la ville semblait une ville d'enfer ;
L'ombre des tours faisait la nuit dans les campagnes ;
Ils donnèrent aux murs l'épaisseur des montagnes.
Sur la porte on grava : " Défense à Dieu d'entrer."
Quand ils eurent fini de clore et de murer,
On mit l'aïeul au centre en une tour de pierre.
Et lui restait lugubre et hagard.—O mon père !
L'œil a-t-il disparu ?—dit en tremblant Tsilla.
Et Caïn répondit : —Non, il est toujours là.
Alors il dit :—Je veux habiter sous la terre,
Comme dans son sépulcre un homme solitaire ;
Rien ne me verra plus, je ne verrai plus rien.—
On fit donc une fosse et Caïn dit :—C'est bien.
Puis il descendit seul sous cette voûte sombre.
Quand il se fut assis sur sa chaise dans l'ombre
Et qu'on eut sur son front fermé le souterrain,
L'œil était dans la tombe et regardait Caïn.

Vous voyez quel est le procédé employé ici par Victor Hugo ; il éclate dans toute sa netteté. Victor Hugo choisit pour chaque époque l'idée morale que, il lui semble, cette époque a apportée au monde. Ici, il a voulu nous montrer l'idée du remords, la naissance du sentiment de la conscience ; et pour nous montrer cette idée, pour lui donner forme, il tâche d'évoquer sous nos yeux le décor même de l'époque. C'est ainsi que nous avons, d'époque en époque, une histoire tout à la fois morale et pittoresque de l'humanité.

Après *la Conscience,* voici *Booz endormi,* et je ne veux de cette pièce vous citer quelques vers que

parce que je ne crois pas que Victor Hugo jamais ait poussé plus loin l'art de décrire. A la fin de cette pièce de *Booz endormi* se trouve une vision des nuits orientales, de ces nuits lumineuses, tièdes, qui sont vraiment une merveille :

L'ombre était nuptiale, auguste et solennelle ;
Les anges y volaient sans doute obscurément,
Car on voyait passer dans la nuit, par moment,
Quelque chose de bleu qui paraissait une aile.

La respiration de Booz qui dormait,
Se mêlait au bruit sourd des ruisseaux sur la mousse :
On était dans le mois où la nature est douce,
Les collines ayant des lis sur leurs chemins.

Ruth songeait et Booz dormait ; l'herbe était noire ;
Les grelots des troupeaux palpitaient vaguement ;
Une immense bonté tombait du firmament ;
C'était l'heure tranquille où les lions vont boire.

Tout reposait dans Ur et dans Jérimadeth ;
Les astres émaillaient le ciel profond et sombre ;
Le croissant fin et clair parmi ces fleurs de l'ombre
Brillait à l'occident, et Ruth se demandait,

Mobile, ouvrant l'œil à moitié sous ses voiles,
Quel dieu, quel moissonneur de l'éternel été
Avait, en s'en allant, négligemment jeté
Cette faucille d'or dans le champ des étoiles.

Vous voyez quelles ressources Victor Hugo a su mettre au service de cette grande idée : une sorte d'histoire légendaire de l'humanité. C'est ici, c'est dans cette dernière partie de son œuvre, que Victor Hugo réalise le plus complètement son génie. Je vous ai montré l'autre fois que, au point de vue des idées et au point de vue de la sensibi-

lité, on pouvait lui préférer d'autres écrivains ; mais Victor Hugo a justement les qualités qui font le poète épique, il a l'art de raconter, il a l'art de décrire ; il a cette espèce de sensibilité, en commun, et vous savez que le poète épique est non pas l'interprète de sa propre sensibilité, mais l'interprète de la sensibilité commune à toute une époque. Ainsi, c'est Victor Hugo lui-même, l'auteur des recueils lyriques, qui devient l'auteur de *la Légende des siècles*, et c'est donc bien, comme je vous l'annonçais au début de cette causerie, la poésie romantique, la poésie personnelle, qui devient historique et impersonnelle.





Cinquième Conférence. — 16 avril 1898.

JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA, FRANÇOIS COPPÉE, SULLY PRUDHOMME, STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ, PAUL VERLAINE.

Monseigneur, Mesdames, Messieurs,



José-Maria de Heredia.

Je vous parlais hier du mouvement qui s'est fait dans notre poésie au milieu de ce siècle et qui a consisté à remplacer la poésie romantique par une poésie impersonnelle et qu'on pourrait appeler réaliste. Nous allons voir aujourd'hui comment le mouvement s'est continué, ce qu'est devenue l'école parnassienne, et quelles sont les dernières tendances qui ont essayé de se faire jour dans notre poésie française.

Parmi les poètes qui composaient l'école du Parnasse, il y en avait, si je ne me trompe, cent trente-sept. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que tous ne sont pas parvenus à la gloire. Il faut choisir, et j'ai choisi, suivant les indications de l'estime publique, José-Maria de Heredia, François Coppée, Sully Prudhomme.

José-Maria de Heredia est parmi tous ces poètes celui qui tient le plus étroitement à la doctrine du Parnasse. Il semble être le dernier venu par la date, car son livre de poésies, intitulé *les Trophées*, n'a paru qu'il y a trois ans; mais il y avait longtemps déjà que les pièces principales des *Trophées* étaient connues; on les savait par cœur et Heredia les récitait dans les salons. Il les récite admirablement; il a tout ce qu'il faut pour dire des vers. D'abord, étant poète, il est beau de sa personne. Les poètes, remarquez-le, les poètes sont beaux. C'est bien pour cela qu'on met toujours leur portrait en tête des volumes. Lamartine a une des têtes les plus admirablement inspirées qu'on puisse imaginer; Victor Hugo avait de la beauté, de la noblesse dans les traits; Alfred de Vigny avait quelque chose de délicat, de fin; Musset était séduisant; Théophile Gautier avait une véritable beauté plastique; François Coppée, une tête de médaille; Sully Prudhomme, un charme de grâce, de rêverie. Les poètes sont beaux, c'est la profession qui veut cela, il y a un physique de l'emploi.

Les critiques, eux, n'ont pas besoin d'être beaux. Villemain était d'une laideur incroyable; Sainte-

Beuve,... Sainte-Beuve n'était pas seulement laid, il était vilain.

Et Heredia dit ses vers avec la voix que lui a donnée la nature, une voix admirablement timbrée, avec des sonorités de cuivre, et il y ajoute,—ce qui est excellent, un défaut de prononciation. Il est... comment faut-il dire ?... bègue ?... ce n'est pas tout à fait cela. Il a une sorte d'hésitation qui, avant les syllabes les plus importantes, a tout à fait l'air d'être quelque chose de voulu et de fait exprès.

Les principaux sonnets de Heredia avaient fait aussi leur chemin par le monde, avant qu'ils fussent réunis en un volume, *les Trophées*, un petit volume qui compose toute l'œuvre du poète, mais qui vaut mieux à lui seul que beaucoup d'autres volumes d'autres poètes.

Heredia, autre particularité, est un ancien élève de l'École des chartes. C'est au milieu des paperasses savantes qu'il a fait son éducation ; il s'est asservi aux méthodes rigoureuses, à la discipline scientifique de l'érudition, et sa poésie est, en effet, une poésie d'érudit. Poésie d'historien, d'abord, qui connaît admirablement le caractère des différentes époques, qui le connaît non pas simplement comme nous le connaissons nous autres, amateurs, mais qui le connaît comme un homme qui a vécu dans l'étude minutieuse et pratiqué familièrement les textes. Ce souci de l'exactitude, Heredia le pousse dans les moindres détails. Si Heredia vous décrit une épée, ou s'il vous décrit un cimeterre, ou s'il vous décrit un instrument quelconque, soyez sûr que la descrip-

tion est exacte et qu'elle vaut un inventaire. Et c'est toujours le terme précis qu'emploie Heredia.

Vous le voyez, c'est la continuation de ce principe, qui était celui de Théophile Gautier et de Leconte de Lisle, à savoir, qu'un poète doit se subordonner à l'objet.

Qu'est-ce qu'a voulu faire Heredia ? qu'est-ce qu'il a fait ? Vous ouvrez les *Trophées*, et qu'est-ce que vous y trouvez ? Vous y trouvez une série de sonnets. Ces sonnets portent sur l'histoire ancienne, sur le moyen âge, sur la découverte de l'Amérique, sur les temps modernes. C'est donc une sorte de légende des siècles, analogue à *la Légende des siècles* de Victor Hugo, mais avec les différences que vous devinez tout de suite.

Victor Hugo a le sens de l'histoire, mais il n'entre pas dans les détails. Victor Hugo est un homme d'imagination plutôt que ce n'est un érudit scrupuleux.

Heredia a l'imagination, mais il a l'érudition scrupuleuse. Ensuite il fallait à Victor Hugo les développements de pièces abondantes ; Heredia réalise ce tour de force de faire tenir des visions, des visions complètes, de larges visions de toute une époque, dans l'espace étroit d'un sonnet de quatorze vers.

Vous savez que Molière, pour ridiculiser un de ses personnages, dit qu'il est en train de mettre en madrigaux toute l'histoire romaine. Heredia a mis en sonnets toute l'histoire de l'humanité. Et ce n'est pas ridicule du tout, et cela a vraiment un caractère épique.

Comment est-ce que le poète y est arrivé ? comment est-ce qu'il a pu, dans un cadre si étroit, nous donner une telle impression de grandeur ? Vous allez le voir.

D'abord, vous savez bien que les proportions du cadre ne font absolument rien à l'impression que nous donne un tableau. Je vous citerais bien des tableaux dont les proportions sont exiguës et dont l'impression est immense. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, vous connaissez certainement notre peintre Meissonier. Quelques-uns des plus grands tableaux d'histoire ont été faits par Meissonier ; ils ont été peints avec un cadre plus petit que cette feuille de papier. Les tableaux de Meissonier et les sonnets de Heredia, ce sont, en effet, des compositions du même genre. Mais le sonnet, avant Heredia, se terminait tout à fait au quatorzième vers ; le quatorzième vers fermait l'horizon. Ce que fait Heredia, c'est justement le contraire, et le dernier vers de son sonnet, — c'est là ce qui en fait la beauté et la grandeur, — élargit l'horizon et le prolonge à une distance infinie.

Je me ferai mieux comprendre en vous citant quelques exemples. Ainsi, il y a un sonnet de Heredia qui est fameux ; c'est celui qui est intitulé *Antoine et Cléopâtre*. *Antoine et Cléopâtre*, c'est la bataille d'Actium ; c'est Antoine battu par Octave, parce qu'il s'est oublié auprès de Cléopâtre ; Cléopâtre étant la cause de la ruine définitive d'Antoine. Comment est-ce que le poète va s'y prendre pour nous exprimer cette idée ? Il nous montre Antoine auprès de Cléopâtre, Antoine

oubliant la bataille qui se livre près de là, les yeux fixés sur les yeux de Cléopâtre et voyant dans les yeux de Cléopâtre sa ruine, sa défaite, ses galères battues, parce que la flotte de Cléopâtre, vous le savez, au moment décisif, est partie, a abandonné Antoine. Il nous le montre donc, il nous montre Antoine auprès de Cléopâtre. Et voici les vers de la fin, qui, justement, nous ouvrent des horizons immenses :

Et sur elle courbé, l'ardent Imperator
Vit dans ses larges yeux, étoilés de points d'or,
Toute une mer immense où fuyaient des galères.

Eh bien, ce dernier vers :

Toute une mer immense où fuyaient des galères,

vous le voyez, au lieu de fermer l'horizon du sonnet, au contraire, l'ouvre sur des perspectives infinies.

C'est ce que nous admirons encore dans un autre de ces sonnets de Heredia, non moins fameux, intitulé *les Conquérants.* Et ces conquérants, ce sont justement ceux qui sont partis pour découvrir cette terre américaine :

Comme un vol de gerfauts hors du charnier natal,
Fatigués de porter leurs misères hautaines,
De Palos, de Moguer, routiers et capitaines
Partaient, ivres d'un rêve héroïque et brutal.

Ils allaient conquérir le fabuleux métal
Que Cipango mûrit dans ses mines lointaines,
Et les vents alizés inclinaient leurs antennes
Aux bords mystérieux du monde occidental.

Chaque soir, espérant des lendemains épiques,
L'azur phosphorescent de la mer des Tropiques
Enchantait leur sommeil d'un mirage doré :

Ou penchés à l'avant des blanches caravelles,
Ils regardaient monter, en un ciel ignoré,
Du fond de l'Océan des étoiles nouvelles.

Tout à l'heure c'était toute une flotte qu'on nous montrait fuyant sur l'Océan, et maintenant ce sont des étoiles, des étoiles nouvelles qu'on fait paraître au ciel. Vous voyez quel est le procédé de Heredia et comment le sonnet a été véritablement renouvelé, agrandi, magnifié par lui.

Mais Heredia est le seul, en effet, qui ait conservé fidèlement la théorie de l'école parnassienne et appliqué, peut-on dire, les leçons de Leconte de Lisle. Au contraire, les autres poètes, qui d'abord s'étaient rangés parmi les parnassiens, vont suivre chacun sa nature, chacun ses tendances, son tempérament. Et vous allez voir combien la poésie d'un François Coppée est différente de celle d'un Heredia, ou celle d'un Sully Prudhomme différente de celle des deux autres.

François Coppée a commencé à écrire un peu avant 1868. Il avait déjà publié des vers, mais ces vers, comme cela est assez naturel, étaient tombés au milieu du silence le plus complet et de l'inattention la plus absolue. C'était cette période du début, pour un poète, la période noire.

Un soir, on allait donner dans un théâtre, un théâtre lointain appelé l'Odéon, une pièce, une petite pièce en un acte et en vers. Vous savez ce que sont ces levers de rideau de l'Odéon : ce sont

des consolations que l'on donne à de bons jeunes gens qui ont la maladie de faire des vers. Ajoutez que cette petite pièce, en un acte et en vers, devait être jouée par une jeune actrice sur qui on ne fondait aucune espérance et dont on disait seulement qu'elle avait une voix assez agréable. La petite pièce fut donnée et, le lendemain, ce fut un engouement comme nous en avons revu de pareils, mais comme, cependant, il n'y en a pas souvent dans un siècle. La petite pièce s'appelait *le Passant*. L'actrice à la voix agréable, tout à fait inconnue, depuis s'est fait assez connaître sous le nom de Sarah Bernhardt, dont on dit, vous le savez, qu'elle a une voix d'or. Et, enfin, l'auteur s'appelait François Coppée. Quand je dis qu'il s'appelait François Coppée, ce n'est pas tout à fait exact. Il s'appelait bien Coppée, mais il ne s'appelait pas François : il s'appelait Francis. Seulement, vous comprenez, Francis Coppée, c'est dur à l'oreille. François sonne d'une façon plus large, le son est plus posé. On se demandait qui était ce François Coppée, et on apprit toutes sortes de choses qui surprirent agréablement la curiosité publique,



FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.

entre autres, qu'il avait déjà publié des vers et que ces vers étaient très jolis. Puis, on sut qu'il appartenait à une famille modeste, qu'il était fils d'un employé de ministère, employé de ministère lui-même, et enfin, ce qui est tout à fait important, qu'il avait la tête du premier consul.

Il est, vous le savez, extrêmement important, pour réussir en littérature, d'avoir une tête. Les gens qui veulent réussir en littérature et qui n'ont pas une tête, sont obligés de s'en faire une. François Coppée avait le masque du premier consul. Ils sont plusieurs dans la littérature qui ont eu le masque du premier consul, et ici c'est en partie l'origine de la réputation littéraire de François Coppée. Vous savez que cela n'a pas nui non plus au succès de Victorien Sardou.

L'auteur du *Passant* avait commencé par des vers d'une sensibilité délicate, un peu précieuse, non sans mièvrerie. Il chercha quelque temps sa voie et il la trouva dans un genre qui, véritablement, lui appartient. François Coppée, on l'appelle, et assez justement, le poète des humbles. Voici quelle a été la conception de François Coppée pour cette poésie des humbles.

François Coppée remarque que, en littérature, on ne s'occupe que des privilégiés : ce sont toujours des gens qui occupent une situation sociale élevée. Notre ancienne littérature classique est tout à fait aristocratique, et si les gens ne sont seulement pas princes, on trouve que ce n'est pas la peine de s'en occuper. Au XIXe siècle, il en est à peu près de même, et on ne songe pas qu'il y a une foule de

gens qui sont peut-être de petites gens, mais qui cependant ont un cœur, qui sont capables de souffrir comme d'autres, et que leurs souffrances peut-être ne sont naturellement ni moins douloureuses, ni, d'une façon générale, moins intéressantes, moins pleines d'humanité que celles des gens qui sont nés dans une condition sociale plus élevée. Coppée est le premier qui se soit véritablement avisé de cette idée, à savoir, que tout le monde a droit à la vie littéraire. Donc, il s'est efforcé, dans une série de petites pièces, de nous montrer quelques-uns de ces humbles et de nous initier aux tristesses, aux découragements, et peut-être aux héroïsmes de ces vies médiocres et obscures.

L'idée est très belle, la tentative est très intéressante et très noble. Je me demande seulement si Coppée a toujours très bien vu ce qu'il y a vraiment de poétique dans ces humbles existences. Car, si les petites gens ont droit à la vie poétique, c'est pourquoi ? C'est parce que dans leur cœur ils souffrent ou ils se réjouissent, mais ce n'est pas parce qu'ils ont un petit commerce, parce qu'ils tiennent de la mercerie ou de l'épicerie ; et si de petites filles qui sont orphelines sont intéressantes, c'est parce qu'elles sont seules dans la vie, mais ce n'est pas parce qu'elles ont vaqué à certaines occupations tout à fait médiocres, banales, et presque basses. Tenez, voici une pièce de Coppée intitulée *le Petit épicier de Montrouge ;* et vous allez voir si ce que nous dit Coppée de ce petit épicier, si la façon dont il

nous le présente, répond véritablement à l'idée que vous vous faites de la poésie :

C'était un tout petit épicier de Montrouge,
Et sa boutique sombre, aux volets peints en rouge,
Exhalait une odeur fade sur le trottoir.
On le voyait debout derrière son comptoir,
En tablier, cassant du sucre avec méthode.
Tous les huit jours, sa vie avait pour épisode
Le bruit d'un camion apportant des tonneaux
De harengs saurs ou bien des caisses de pruneaux;
Et, le reste du temps, c'était dans sa boutique
Un calme rarement troublé par la pratique,
Servantes de rentiers, ou femmes d'artisans,
Logeant dans ce faubourg à demi paysan.
Ce petit homme roux, aux pâleurs maladives,
Etait triste, faisant des affaires chétives
Et, comme on dit, ayant grand'peine à vivoter ;
Son histoire pouvait vite se raconter.
Il était de Soissons, et son humble famille,
Le voyant à quinze ans faible comme une fille,
Voulut lui faire apprendre un commerce à Paris.
Un cousin, épicier lui-même, l'avait pris,
Lui donnant le logis avec la nourriture;
Et, malgré la cousine, épouse avare et dure,
Aux mystères de l'art il put l'initier.
Il avait ce qu'il faut pour un bon épicier :
Il était ponctuel, sobre, chaste, économe.
Son patron l'estimait, et, quand ce fut un homme,
Voulant récompenser ses mérites profonds,
Il lui fit prendre femme et lui vendit son fonds.

Eh bien, je vous demande si véritablement c'est cela qui vous donne une idée de la langue des dieux. Mais voici un petit tableau qui peut-être vous élèvera à des hauteurs plus nobles. Il s'agit de deux petites filles qui sont restées orphelines. L'aînée

sert de mère à la cadette ; elle la conduit à l'école, et, avant que la cadette entre à l'école, l'aînée.... Mais vous allez voir ce que fait l'aînée :

Les deux petites sont en deuil,
Et la plus grande, c'est la mère,
A conduit l'autre jusqu'au seuil
Qui mène à l'école primaire.

Elle inspecte, dans le panier,
Les tartines de confitures
Et jette un coup d'œil au dernier
Devoir du cahier d'écriture.

Puis, comme c'est un matin froid
Où l'eau gèle dans la rigole,
Et comme il faut que l'enfant soit
En état d'entrer à l'école,

Ecartant le vieux châle noir
Dont la petite s'emmitoufle,
L'aînée alors tire un mouchoir,
Lui prend le nez et lui dit : "Souffle."

Et si vous ne saviez pas encore pourquoi la poésie a été inventée, vous le savez maintenant, c'est pour exprimer de pareilles opérations...

Je crains donc que François Coppée ne se soit souvent trompé dans l'exécution, et qu'ayant eu une idée très juste, à savoir, que les humbles, les petits ont droit à la vie littéraire, il n'ait cherché l'intérêt de ses peintures dans l'extérieur, dans les détails qui, par eux-mêmes, n'ont rien d'intéressant, et non pas dans l'intérieur, dans les sentiments qui, eux seuls, méritent de nous arrêter.

Poète des humbles, François Coppée est en outre et encore, et peut-être surtout, un poète parisien. Il est né à Paris, il a toujours vécu à Paris. Il aime Paris comme on l'aime, quand on l'aime vraiment. C'était Montaigne, vous le savez, au XVIe siècle, qui disait que, quand on aime Paris, on aime jusqu'à ses verrues. François Coppée aime Paris, surtout dans ses verrues. Car Paris, à l'étranger, on ne le connaît pas du tout. Quand les étrangers viennent à Paris, ils vont dans les beaux quartiers, ils vont là où il y a de belles maisons, de grandes avenues. Les grandes maisons et les belles avenues, c'est un peu plus beau, c'est un peu plus grand, mais c'est partout la même chose. Le véritable Paris, c'est le Paris qui se cache à ceux qui ne font que le traverser ; c'est, si vous le voulez, le Paris des quartiers déserts, c'est le Paris des quartiers lointains, c'est le Paris des quartiers pauvres. C'est justement celui-là que François Coppée a aimé et c'est celui-là qu'il a su décrire. Nul autre que lui n'a mieux, en quelques vers, dans un cadre étroit, donné des impressions justes des paysages de banlieue ou des paysages de faubourg.

L'œuvre de François Coppée est d'ailleurs multiple, variée. Si nous en avions le temps, nous pourrions suivre François Coppée dans son théâtre. Il a donné quelques-unes des plus belles pièces en vers, que nous ayons lues dans ces derniers temps. Il y a deux ou trois ans, il faisait représenter un drame plein de généreux sentiments et de beaux vers, intitulé *Pour la couronne.*

Pour la couronne, c'est un fils qui, pour la patrie, pour l'honneur est obligé de tuer son père. Le malheur, c'est que, dans le même temps, et pendant qu'on jouait *Pour la couronne* à l'Odéon, de l'autre côté de la Seine, au Théâtre-Français, on jouait un autre drame où un père tuait son fils. De sorte que, d'un côté de la Seine, le fils tuait le père, de l'autre côté, le père tuait le fils, et cela donnait une idée de la famille française....

Enfin, François Coppée a écrit, dans le genre de la *Légende des siècles* et des *Trophées,* de beaux morceaux, de beaux fragments épiques. Il y en a qui sont dans toutes les mémoires, dans tous les recueils choisis. Vous trouverez la *Lettre d'un mobile breton,* qui est belle par la générosité de ses sentiments et par la simplicité de la forme ; ou bien ce poème intitulé *la Bénédiction,* où l'on voit un vieux prêtre, dans un couvent envahi par les soldats, continuer à dire la messe sans se laisser troubler par le danger ; frappé d'un coup de fusil, frappé à mort, et, en mourant, bénissant ceux qui viennent de le tuer.

Il y a donc, vous le voyez, dans François Coppée une générosité de sentiments très réelle. Il a des intentions qui ont toujours été très belles, très nobles ; le défaut, chez Coppée, c'est que, trop souvent il a rapproché la poésie de la prose et qu'il y a certains vers, chez lui, que rien véritablement ne distingue, non seulement de la prose, mais de la prose la plus banale.

Ce que Coppée a essayé de faire, c'est de dégager la poésie des spectacles de chaque jour, des spectacles

de la vie ordinaire, et, s'il le faut, des spectacles de la rue ; il n'a pas cherché la poésie dans une inspiration rare et dans une inspiration qui est comme lointaine de l'humanité.

Nous allons trouver quelque chose d'analogue chez Sully Prudhomme. Seulement, tandis que Coppée cherchait l'inspiration poétique, pour ainsi dire, en dehors de lui, Sully Prudhomme va la chercher en lui. La poésie de Sully Prudhomme, c'est la poésie intime, dans ce qu'elle a d'ailleurs de plus délicat et de plus fin. Vous avez quelquefois entendu dire de certaines gens : " C'est une belle âme." Eh bien, peu d'hommes ont mérité cette définition aussi bien que Sully Prudhomme. C'est une âme d'élite, c'est une nature exquise, et les notes de la sensibilité la plus fine, dans notre poésie française, c'est certainement Sully Prudhomme qui les a données.



SULLY PRUDHOMME.

Comme vous pourriez ne pas me croire sur parole, je vais feuilleter avec vous l'un des recueils de Sully Prudhomme, intitulé *les Solitudes* et, après que je vous en aurai lu deux ou trois pièces, je suis bien sûr que nous serons du même avis. Je ne vais pas bien loin, je prends la première *Solitude.* Cette première *Solitude* nous expose les tristesses

auxquelles on ne songe pas d'habitude, les tristesses que peuvent avoir de petits, de tout petits écoliers, qui n'arrivent pas à se faire à être séparés de la famille. Mais, qu'est-ce que vous voulez, il y en a comme ça !

On voit dans les sombres écoles,
Des petits qui pleurent toujours !
Les autres font leurs cabrioles,
Eux, ils restent au fond des cours.

Leurs blouses sont très bien tirées,
Leurs pantalons en bon état,
Leurs chaussures toujours cirées ;
Ils ont l'air sage et délicat.

Les forts les appellent des filles,
Et les malins des innocents :
Ils sont doux, ils donnent leurs billes,
Ils ne seront pas commerçants.

Les plus poltrons leur font des niches,
Et les gourmands sont leurs copains,
Leurs camarades les croient riches,
Parce qu'ils se lavent les mains.

Ils frissonnent sous l'œil du maître,
Son ombre les rend malheureux.
Ces enfants n'auraient pas dû naître,
L'enfance est trop dure pour eux !

Oh ! la leçon qui n'est pas sue,
Le devoir qui n'est pas fini !
Une réprimande reçue,
Le déshonneur d'être puni !

Tout leur est terreur et martyre ;
Le jour, c'est la cloche, et, le soir,
Quand le maître enfin se retire,
C'est le désert du grand dortoir :

La lueur des lampes y tremble
Sur les linceuls des lits de fer;
Le sifflet des dormeurs ressemble
Au vent sur les tombes, l'hiver.

Pendant que les autres sommeillent,
Faits au coucher de la prison,
Ils pensent au dimanche, ils veillent
Pour se rappeler la maison;

Ils songent qu'ils dormaient naguères
Douillettement ensevelis
Dans les berceaux, et que les mères
Les prenaient parfois dans leurs lits.

O mères, coupables absentes,
Qu'alors vous leur paraissez loin!
A ces créatures naissantes
Il manque un indicible soin;

On leur a donné les chemises,
Les couvertures qu'il leur faut:
D'autres que vous les leur ont mises,
Elles ne leur tiennent pas chaud.

Mais, tout ingrates que vous êtes,
Ils ne peuvent vous oublier,
Et cachent leurs petites têtes,
En sanglotant, sous l'oreiller.

En voici une autre dont l'inspiration est aussi exquise et un peu plus rare. Il y a, chez Sully Prudhomme, une sorte de subtilité, mais une subtilité qui ne dégénère pas en mièvrerie. Sully Prudhomme, c'est l'homme qui sait dire joliment des choses qui souvent sont très profondes. Le poète veut dire ceci: ce qui nous rend si malheureux, c'est que souvent nous nous sentons

seuls, nous ne trouvons pas d'âme avec laquelle la nôtre soit entièrement en rapport, en correspondance. Et voici comment il exprime cette idée. Il suppose qu'il s'adresse aux étoiles, aux étoiles de la voie lactée, et qu'il trouve que ces étoiles ont un air de tristesse. Tristes, pourquoi ? Comment cela se fait-il ? Et ces étoiles lui répondent : " Oui, nous sommes tristes, mais nous sommes tristes, parce que nous sommes seules. On croit, quand on nous voit de la terre, que nous sommes tout près les unes des autres ; en réalité, il y a entre chacune de nous et sa voisine des espaces immenses. Nous sommes pareilles à des âmes qui n'ont pas trouvé une âme sœur " :

Aux étoiles j'ai dit un soir :
" Vous ne paraissez pas heureuses ;
Vos lueurs, dans l'infini noir,
Ont des tendresses douloureuses ;

Et je crois voir, au firmament,
Un deuil blanc mené par des vierges
Qui portent d'innombrables cierges
Et se suivent languissamment.

" Etes-vous toujours en prière ?
Etes-vous des astres blessés ?
Car ce sont des pleurs de lumière,
Non des rayons, que vous versez.

" Vous, les étoiles, les aïeules
Des créatures et des dieux,
Vous avez des pleurs dans les yeux..."
Elles m'ont dit : " Nous sommes seules...

Chacune de nous est très loin
Des sœurs dont tu la crois voisine ;
Sa clarté caressante et fine
Dans sa patrie est sans témoin ;

" Et l'intime ardeur de ses flammes
Expire aux cieux indifférents."
Je leur ai dit : " Je vous comprends,
Car vous ressemblez à nos âmes :

" Ainsi que vous, chacune luit
Loin des sœurs qui semblent près d'elle,
Et la solitaire immortelle
Brûle en silence dans la nuit."

Enfin, voici une pièce de vers qui est une des plus harmonieuses et des plus profondément tendres qu'il y ait dans notre poésie ; c'est une pièce que Sully Prudhomme intitule *l'Agonie,* et il y exprime cette idée qu'il veut, lorsqu'il viendra à mourir, être bercé par un peu de musique :

Vous qui m'aiderez dans mon agonie,
Ne me dites rien ;
Faites que j'entende un peu d'harmonie,
Et je mourrai bien.

La musique apaise, enchante et délie
Des choses d'en bas :
Bercez ma douleur ; je vous en supplie,
Ne lui parlez pas.

Je suis las des mots, je suis las d'entendre
Ce qui peut mentir ;
J'aime mieux les sons qu'au lieu de comprendre
Je n'ai qu'à sentir :

Une mélodie où l'âme se plonge
Et qui, sans effort,
Me fera passer du délire au songe,
Du songe à la mort.

Vous qui m'aiderez dans mon agonie,
    Ne me dites rien.
Pour allègement un peu d'harmonie
    Me fera grand bien.

Vous irez chercher ma pauvre nourrice,
    Qui mène un troupeau,
Et vous lui direz que c'est un caprice,
    Au bord du tombeau,

D'entendre chanter, tout bas, de sa bouche,
    Un air d'autrefois,
Simple et monotone, un doux air qui touche
    Avec peu de voix.

Vous la trouverez : les gens des chaumières
    Vivent très longtemps;
Et je suis d'un monde où l'on ne vit guères
    Plusieurs fois vingt ans.

Vous nous laisserez tous les deux ensemble :
    Nos cœurs s'uniront;
Elle chantera d'un accent qui tremble,
    La main sur mon front.

Lors elle sera peut-être la seule
    Qui m'aime toujours,
Et je m'en irai dans son chant d'aïeule
    Vers mes premiers jours,

Pour ne pas sentir à ma dernière heure,
    Que mon cœur se fend,
Pour ne plus penser, pour que l'homme meure
    Comme est né l'enfant.

Vous qui m'aiderez dans mon agonie,
    Ne me dites rien;
Faites que j'entende un peu d'harmonie,
    Et je mourrai bien.

Vous voyez quelle est cette note de Sully Prudhomme, note intime, recueillie, délicate, triste, ou plutôt mélancolique, d'une de ces mélancolies que nous aimons, qui sont douces, qui sont agréables, qui nous apportent une volupté délicieuse.

Et tous les vers que je vous ai lus jusqu'ici, vous les avez très bien compris, parce que une des premières qualités de notre langue française, dans la poésie comme dans la prose, c'est justement la clarté.

Attendez un peu que je vous parle de la poésie symboliste. Je vous dirai quelques mots de cette école de poésie qui, dans ces derniers temps, a fait un certain bruit et qui s'appelle la poésie décadente, ou, si vous le préférez, la poésie symboliste, ou, si vous aimez mieux, la poésie instrumentiste, ou, si cela vous fait plus de plaisir, la poésie symbolo-instrumentiste, ou enfin, si vous y tenez absolument, la poésie instrumento-symboliste.

A quoi se reconnaît la poésie décadente ou symboliste ? Elle se reconnaît à ceci d'abord, c'est que d'habitude les recueils de vers sont publiés dans un format connu et qui a quelque chose d'humain : l'in-douze, l'in-octavo, l'in-seize ou l'in-trente-deux, mais les recueils décadents sont publiés en plaquettes de formats tout à fait inouïs ; il y en a de carrés, il y en a de longs, il y en a d'ovales, il y en a de toutes sortes de formes. Ils sont imprimés généralement sur du papier de chandelle ; et les vers, au lieu d'y avoir une mesure régulière, les vers ont tantôt treize pieds,—c'est le minimum,—tantôt seize ou dix-sept pieds ; d'autres fois, on essaie de les

scander, mais on n'y arrive pas : il n'y a aucun rythme, aucune mesure appréciable. Mais ce n'est pas encore là le signe distinctif, caractéristique, celui qui est vraiment décadent et vraiment symboliste. Ce signe, c'est celui-ci : c'est l'incompréhensibilité. Un vers décadent,—vous verrez pourquoi tout à l'heure, mais il faut au moins constater le fait,—un vers décadent est d'abord un vers qu'on ne peut pas comprendre ; je dis qu'on ne peut pas comprendre, en y mettant toute la bonne volonté du monde. Je pourrais vous citer n'importe quel vers décadent, mais je ne veux pas que vous puissiez m'accuser d'avoir choisi exprès, et je vais vous lire, vous soumettre, soumettre à votre interprétation un sonnet qui est de l'un des maîtres de l'école décadente, de Stéphane Mallarmé lui-même. Ce sonnet est un sonnet fameux, un des plus admirés dans l'école décadente, un sonnet à Richard Wagner. Le voici :

Le silence déjà funèbre d'une moire
Dispose plus qu'un pli seul sur le mobilier
Que doit un tassement du principal pilier
Précipiter avec le manque de mémoire.

Comprenez-vous ?... Moi non plus. Mais je continue :

Notre si v eil ébat triomphal du grimoire,
Hiéroglyphes dont s'exalte le millier
A propager de l'aile un frisson familier,
Enfouissez-le moi plutôt dans une armoire !

Du souriant fracas originel haï
Entre elles de clartés maîtresses a jailli
Jusque vers un parvis né pour leur simulacre.

Trompettes tout haut d'or pâmé sur des vélins,
Le dieu Richard Wagner irradiant un sacre
Mal tu par l'encre même en sanglots sybillins.

Eh bien, il n'y a dans tout cela, pour ma part, qu'un mot que je comprenne; c'est le dernier : sybillin. Vous voyez, lu de la façon que je viens de vous le lire, en commençant par le premier mot et en finissant par le dernier ça n'a aucun sens appréciable. Vous vous dites peut-être : " Mais on pourrait commencer par la fin et remonter jusqu'au commencement ; on pourrait les lire à l'envers. " Je n'essaierai pas : j'ai essayé à part moi, ça n'a pas plus de sens. Ou encore, vous savez, aux dernières pages des journaux, il y a des mots qu'on propose à la curiosité des lecteurs, des mots qui sont des énigmes, des énigmes que résout l'Œdipe du Café du commerce, il y a des mots en losange, des mots carrés, des mots qu'on lit en travers, de côté.

Eh bien, on peut essayer de toutes les manières sur ces vers-là, ou sur les autres vers de l'école décadente : ni en les prenant par le commencement ni en les prenant par la fin, ni en les lisant de droite à gauche, ni en les lisant de gauche à droite, comme de l'écriture européenne ou comme de l'écriture chinoise, on n'arrive à y rien comprendre.

Et, vous comprenez, il faut toujours se dire : Je ne comprends pas, mais est-ce la faute de ce que je lis ou est-ce ma faute ? Il faut être modeste. Si c'é-

tait nous qui avions tort de ne pas comprendre ? Mais pas du tout ! Nous ne comprenons pas, parce qu'il n'y a rien à comprendre, parce que ces vers n'ont pas de sens, parce que les auteurs n'ont pas voulu qu'ils eussent de sens.

La théorie de l'école symboliste est, en effet, celle-ci : des vers ne doivent pas exprimer des idées. Des vers sont comparables à la musique, qui n'exprime pas des idées, mais qui suggère des sentiments, des états d'âme. La musique ne peut pas exprimer une idée. Essayez un peu de dire, en jouant sur le piano : " Le temps est douteux, il faut prendre un parapluie." Ce n'est pas possible. Mais la musique vous jette dans certains états d'âme, à la fois très vagues, très troublants, très profonds, parfois douloureux, parfois délicieux. C'est justement ce que doit faire la poésie, d'après les décadents. Et, par conséquent, un certain nombre de syllabes, qui ne représentent aucune idée mais qui évoquent ou des images ou des sensations, voilà ce que doit être la poésie. Et ils ont fait le catalogue, la liste, le répertoire des sensations que peuvent éveiller les syllabes, des rapports qu'il y a entre les voyelles, les couleurs et les sons.

Vous ne savez peut-être pas que chaque voyelle a sa couleur ? Eh bien oui, chaque voyelle a sa couleur, et il ne faut pas confondre.

A est noir, E est blanc, I est bleu, O est rouge, U est jaune.

Voulez-vous éveiller des images noires ? Vous mettrez beaucoup de " a " dans le vers.

Et le noir, c'est l'orgue ; le blanc, c'est la harpe ; le bleu, c'est le violon ; le rouge, la trompette ; et le jaune, la flûte.

L'orgue,—j'emprunte toutes ces définitions à un livre de théorie sur la poésie décadente,—l'orgue exprime la monotonie, le doute et la simplesse ; la harpe exprime la sérénité ; le violon, la passion et la prière ; la trompette, la gloire et l'ovation ; la flûte exprime l'ingénuité et le sourire.

Voilà ce qu'il y a au fond de cette poésie symboliste. C'est une tentative pour vider la poésie des idées et des sentiments et pour substituer à ce qui avait été appelé la poésie jusque-là je ne sais quelle musique, musique indéchiffrable, musique que chacun interprètera à sa manière.

L'école décadente et symboliste a fait un certain bruit. Elle a eu comme principaux représentants Stéphane Mallarmé, qui est comme le grand prêtre, le pontife de l'école, et un pauvre homme qu'on a essayé de donner comme un grand poète, auquel il s'agit d'élever une statue : c'est Paul Verlaine.

Paul Verlaine a publié des recueils alternants, tantôt un recueil de poésies tout à fait désobligeantes, désagréables par les sujets, inconvenantes, odieuses, et tantôt des recueils mystiques. Cette espèce d'opposition, entre ce qu'il y avait de honteux dans certains de ces recueils et ce qu'il y avait d'édifiant dans d'autres recueils, a beaucoup frappé l'attention, et on a essayé de nous donner Verlaine pour une espèce de François Villon, revenu en plein XIXe siècle.

Vous savez que François Villon a été, dans son

temps, condamné pour assassinat et qu'il est de ceux qui ont fait les vers les plus beaux qu'il y ait dans notre poésie, et souvent même les plus recueillis et les plus touchants. On a voulu nous donner Verlaine pour un autre Villon, ayant, comme lui, la possibilité de passer d'un extrême à l'autre.

Verlaine est, en réalité, un malade, dont la poésie n'a eu de succès qu'auprès de quelques excentriques et, il faut bien le dire, d'un certain nombre d'étrangers. C'est surtout aux Etats-Unis que j'ai entendu faire grand éloge de Paul Verlaine. Mais Paul Verlaine, en dépit du bruit qu'on a essayé de faire autour de son nom, n'est qu'un écrivain manqué, qui a commencé par écrire de beaux vers, qui avait de beaux dons, et qui a fini de la façon la plus lamentable. Pour vous donner une idée de ce qu'était l'homme, voici quelques souvenirs, écrits sur lui par quelqu'un qui l'a bien vu :

" Un jour, voici longtemps, j'étais entré écrire une lettre en je ne sais quel café désert de la rue Soufflot. Quand j'eus terminé ma correspondance, je regardai autour de moi et, à la table en face de la mienne, j'aperçus un consommateur que je n'avais pas remarqué, en pénétrant dans la pénombre de l'estaminet. C'était une sorte de vagabond pitoyable, avec une tête de faune, vicieuse, étrangement modelée et une attitude générale plus que bizarre. Ce personnage avait une plume entre les doigts et devant lui une feuille de papier blanc, un encrier et un verre d'absinthe. Parfois, il griffonnait hâtivement quelques lignes, en marmottant des paroles inintelligibles. Puis, brusquement, il trem-

pait sa plume dans son verre, la rejetait sur la table d'un geste de dépit, se frottait les mains ou les agitait avec un tremblement, riait d'un rire niais, qui accentuait encore le relief inquiétant de sa physionomie tourmentée ; puis, soudain, il avalait une gorgée de son breuvage et reprenait sa besogne, ne voyant rien autour de lui, toujours tremblotant, toujours convulsif, comme secoué par une sorte de fièvre dont on n'aurait trop su dire si elle était la conséquence de la folie ou de l'alcool.

" Au moment de payer et de sortir, j'interrogeai le garçon sur cet unique et singulier client de son établissement. " C'est un poète, me dit-il, avec une nuance de dédain, il est toujours comme ça. Il s'appelle M. Verlaine. Pour le moment, il fait des vers. On dit qu'il a du talent, mais quand il est tout à fait ivre, il devient méchant comme le diable."

Voici une autre impression, rapportée par le même écrivain :

" Quelques années après, M. Verlaine, dans l'intervalle, étant passé grand homme, plusieurs de mes amis l'invitèrent à dîner et me firent la grâce de me convoquer à ces agapes extra littéraires. Le poète arriva, vêtu d'un grand ulster sordide, à carreaux jaunes, avec un chapeau mou, fangeux et un énorme gourdin à la main.

" Cette soirée, dont j'ai gardé un souvenir très net, pourrait se diviser en trois parties. D'abord, Verlaine à jeun, insignifiant, sauf peut-être une préoccupation d'extrême politesse, un souci assez manifeste,—si bizarre qu'il semble chez le person-

nage,—de montrer qu'il avait les usages du monde. Ensuite, Verlaine en état de demi-ivresse. Là, il fut infiniment curieux et, dans son genre, tout à fait admirable. Enfin, Verlaine ivre-mort. Et, alors, rarement j'ai assisté à un aussi lamentable spectacle que cet écroulement brusque d'un être humain dans l'inconscience la plus hideuse."

Il y a, chez Verlaine, quelques vers, d'ailleurs assez rares, qui ne manquent pas de délicatesse. Mais ces quelques vers, perdus dans l'ensemble d'une œuvre déplaisante et que je ne veux pas analyser davantage, ne suffisent pas à imposer son nom à l'attention et, si je vous ai parlé de Verlaine, c'est pour vous dire que nous ne l'acceptons pas comme représentant de la poésie française de ces dernières années, et que nous protestons énergiquement contre les tentatives qui ont été faites, hors de chez nous, pour représenter en lui l'art de chez nous.

La poésie décadente est aujourd'hui une tentative finie, qui n'a pas réussi. Ce qu'on a appelé le vers libre est aujourd'hui quelque chose de tout à fait abandonné. Et puis, je ne dis pas qu'il n'y ait pas une sorte de crise dans notre poésie, qu'on ne cherche pas avec une sorte de malaise quelle est la forme nouvelle qui sera celle de la poésie de demain, mais, en tout cas, on a renoncé à la chercher dans l'incompréhensible, dans l'inintelligible, et les derniers succès de la poésie chez nous, ont montré, au contraire, qu'il y a un retour vers les qualités essentielles à notre race, à savoir, la clarté, le bon sens, l'honnêteté et la délicatesse des

sentiments. Que sera d'ailleurs la poésie de demain ? il n'appartient pas plus à moi qu'à aucun autre de faire à ce sujet de pronostics. Pour prédire à coup sûr, vous savez qu'il n'y a qu'un moyen, c'est de prédire après coup.

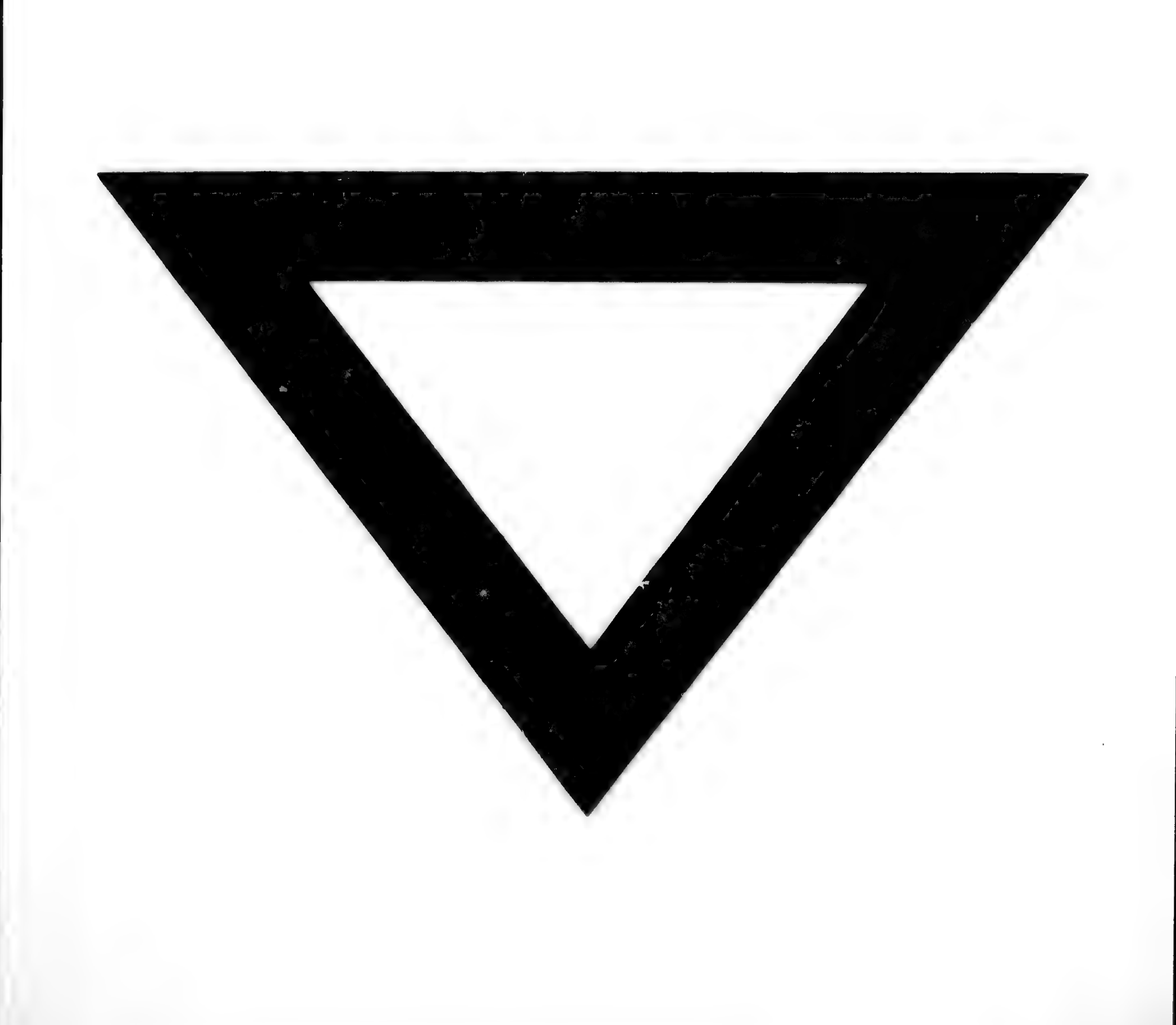
Je m'arrête donc ici. J'ai essayé, comme vous l'avez vu, de vous donner une vue d'ensemble de la poésie lyrique en France, au XIXe siècle. Je n'ai pu que vous indiquer les sommets, je n'ai pu parler de chaque auteur que d'une façon très rapide et nécessairement très incomplète. J'ai essayé d'indiquer ce qui m'a semblé le plus caractéristique, de définir chaque auteur, dans ce qu'il y a chez lui d'essentiel. Je l'ai fait en toute liberté, ne me croyant pas imposé de faire continuellement un panégyrique des auteurs dont je vous parlais. Il me semble que cela même ajoutait plus de prix et plus d'autorité à ce que je pouvais vous dire. Je vous ai indiqué le bien et le mal. J'ai essayé de vous faire ressortir les qualités littéraires. J'ai analysé, sans les discuter, les doctrines. A vous maintenant de choisir d'après vos préférences, d'après vos goûts, d'après vos principes, d'après des principes que, j'espère, je n'ai ni choqués, ni chagrinés.

Il me reste, en terminant, à vous remercier. Le premier jour, je vous remerciais d'être venus une première fois ; aujourd'hui, je vous remercie d'être venus une cinquième fois. Je ne me dissimule pas ce qu'il y avait d'indiscret dans la tentative que je faisais, à savoir, de vous demander de venir cinq fois de suite, sans vous laisser un jour de repos.

Vous y avez répondu avec une bienveillance dont je suis infiniment reconnaissant. Je vous en remercie tous et je vous demande la permission de remercier surtout ceux de la galerie supérieure, les jeunes gens, ceux qui me prouvent, en étant venus ici, que la langue française a au Canada un bel et grand avenir.



TABLE



general feeling that the government and discipline of the institution should be free from all sectarian bias, so that the rights and privileges of all might be maintained without offence to the religious opinions of any. Numerous petitions were presented, praying for a repeal or modification of the charter. In 1837 the Local Assembly, by authority of the Home Government, passed an Act removing many of the objectionable features of the charter, but certain restrictions still remained, and it failed to meet the wishes of dissenters, as well as of many liberal-minded members of the Church of England. The scheme of establishing the university, however, which had remained in abeyance since the granting of the charter, was now pushed forward. A building of great size was projected, and a wing of it was actually erected in what is now known as the Queen's Park, Toronto. As mentioned on a former page,* the foundation stone was laid by Sir Charles Bagot in April, 1842. The institution was opened for the admission of students somewhat more than a year afterwards, but it in no sense met the popular demand, and a continual agitation was kept up against it. Mr. Draper's Government, as has already been seen,† endeavoured to conciliate public opinion by introducing a measure for establishing a university embracing three denominational colleges, but Church of England influence was too powerful in the Assembly, and the Bill was withdrawn. Mr. Baldwin, though a sincere Episcopalian, recognized the injustice of maintaining a sectarian institution out of Provincial funds, and did not hesitate to grapple with the difficulty. His Bill amended the charter of King's College, abolished the faculty of divinity and all other denominational restrictions, enlarged the powers of Convocation, and established a purely non-sectarian seat of learning, under the name of "the University of Toronto." Dr. Strachan's desire to preserve the Provincial University as an essentially Church of England institution was thus frustrated, and he

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 191. † *Ante*, p. 13.

applied himself with characteristic energy to the establishing of a seat of learning in accordance with his views. The outcome of his exertions was the founding, several years later, of the University of Trinity College, Toronto.

Several railway bills were passed during the session. For some years past evidences had not been wanting that the old methods of travel and transportation would have to be abandoned, and that the railway carriage was destined to supersede the cumbrous forwarding wagon. Many leading merchants and capitalists of the Province had begun to grasp the main points of the situation, and to form plans in accordance with the new order of things. During the last few years many railway charters had been obtained from Parliament, but very little had been done in the way of actual construction. As early as 1836 a horse-railway had been opened, connecting Laprairie, on the St. Lawrence, with St. Johns, on the Richelieu, and a year later locomotives were employed upon it. In 1839 the Erie and Ontario Company opened a line of horse-railway between Queenston and Chippewa, but the steepness of the grades was such that it could not be worked satisfactorily, and soon fell into disuse. In 1845 a charter was obtained by the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway Company, for a line to connect with the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Company of Portland, Maine. This line, by amalgamation, subsequently developed into the Grand Trunk.* In 1846 the Lachine Railway, which also now forms part of the Grand Trunk, was begun. The legislation of 1849 plainly indicated that the era of railways had fairly set in in Canada. An Act was passed guaranteeing the interest on loans to be raised by any company chartered by the Legislature for the construction of a line not less than seventy-five miles in extent. This measure gave an additional impulse to railway construction, and was eagerly taken advantage

*On the subject of Canadian railways generally, see "Eighty Years' Progress of British North America," p. 190 *et seq.*, and Trout's "Railways of Canada," *passim.*

of by various enterprising companies. The Great Western, the Northern, and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railways were all materially assisted in their development by this Act.*

Acts were also passed making additional provision for the administration of justice in both sections of the Province. In Lower Canada the establishment of a Court of Queen's Bench having appellate jurisdiction in criminal matters was provided for. In Upper Canada the Court of Common Pleas and the Court of Error and Appeal were established, and important changes were introduced into the practice and organization of the Court of Chancery. The last-named Court had long been a by-word and a reproach. Since its original establishment in 1837 the Chancellorship had been vested in the Crown. The Vice-Chancellor and sole Judge was the Hon. Robert Jameson, mentioned on former pages.† This gentleman was a fairly efficient jurist, but he had given way to personal infirmities, and had allowed the business of the Court to fall greatly into arrear. Suitors were sometimes unable to obtain decrees after years of delay, and there was an utter want of order and arrangement in the procedure. The Chancery Act of 1849 was prepared by the Solicitor-General, Mr. Blake, but was introduced by Mr. Baldwin, who was solely responsible for its provisions. It increased the number of judges to three, and established a system of procedure which, capably directed, as it was, soon rescued the Court from the odium which had gathered round it. The question at once arose as to who was the proper person to be appointed to the onerous and dignified office of Chancellor. The profession, almost with one voice, indicated Mr. Blake himself as the most suitable person in the Province for the position. Mr. Blake had entered upon what would certainly have been a very brilliant Parliamentary career, which he was loth to forego. Though he had been only two sessions in

* "Canada: 1849 to 1859," by the Hon. A. T. Galt, p. 25.

† *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 108, 109, 318.

the Assembly he had made a reputation which the oldest Parliamentary veteran might well have envied. He however yielded to the pressure of Mr. Baldwin and others, and on the 1st of October, 1849, became Chancellor of Upper Canada. The result fully justified the sanguine predictions of the profession, and the judgments of the Court of Chancery soon inspired the respect which was justly their due. It may be added that Mr. Blake retained the Chancellorship until March, 1862, when failing health compelled him to relinquish it. He died in Toronto in 1870. Mr. Jameson continued to sit as Vice-Chancellor until the end of 1850, when he was permitted to retire on a pension.

A ministerial measure to increase the number of Parliamentary representatives from 84 to 150—*i.e.*, 75 from each section of the Province, instead of 42—was withdrawn, the Ministry being unable to obtain a two-thirds vote* in its favour, as required by the twenty-sixth section of the Union Act with respect to any measure for making a new apportionment of ridings and representation.

Among the other important legislation of the session were an Act providing for a complete system of municipal organization in Upper Canada; an Act amending the law relative to duties of Customs, whereby considerable change was made in the tariff; a new Act regulating the admission of Immigrants into the Province; a new School Act for Upper Canada, and an amended one for the Lower section of the Province. The great question relating to the Clergy Reserves, which will hereafter claim careful consideration, also came before the Assembly, but the time had not yet arrived for dealing with it.

The entire legislation of the session, including five reserved bills, consisted of no fewer than 200 measures. The most noteworthy one

*The full representation being 84, the number of votes (two-thirds of the whole) required to carry the measure was 56. The number of members who voted for it was 55, so that a single additional vote would have carried it.

of them all, in view of its immediate and ultimate results, yet remains to be mentioned—the famous Rebellion Losses Bill.

As its name imports, this Bill was a legacy bequeathed by the troubles of 1837-'38. No sooner had the insurrection been put down than measures were set on foot in both Provinces to compensate those loyal subjects who had suffered direct pecuniary loss by it. Legislation on the subject was introduced into the Upper Canadian Assembly early in 1838, and on the 6th of March in that year an Act was passed authorizing the appointment of Commissioners to investigate the claims of "certain loyal inhabitants" for losses sustained during "the late unnatural rebellion." Commissioners were accordingly appointed, and in due time they made their report, which was the basis of further legislation during the session of 1839.* In Lower Canada the Special Council in like manner made some provision by Ordinance for the recompense of loyalists whose property had been destroyed by rebels. But such legislation as this did not fully meet the requirements of the case. There had been considerable wilful and incidental destruction of property by persons acting in support of authority, and it was felt that the persons aggrieved thereby were entitled to compensation. The Upper Canadian Acts and the Lower Canadian Ordinance failed to provide for compensation in such cases, and supplementary legislation was thought desirable. There was much discussion on the subject, but no further legislative action was taken until the first session after the Union, when an Act was passed

* For minute information as to the various Acts relating to this subject prior to the great measure of 1849, see "The Questions: Was the Late Rebel-Paying Measure forced on the Present Ministry by their Predecessors? and is that Bill a Transcript of the Rebellion Claim Bill for Upper Canada," etc., etc.; Montreal, 1849. See also "The Question Answered: Did the Ministry intend to pay Rebels?" Montreal, 1849. The pamphlet last-named is understood to have been the joint production of Mr. Hugh E. Montgomerie and Mr.—now the Hon.—Alexander Morris. The former was a clever young Tory journalist of Montreal, and Vice-President of the Shakspeare Club of that city. He was arrested and imprisoned for instigating the mob to riot in connection with the Rebellion Losses Bill. He returned to Great Britain soon afterwards, and now resides there. Mr. Morris was then a law student in the office of the ex-Attorney-General, Mr. Badgley, in Montreal.

by the United Parliament extending the compensation to loss occasioned by violence on the part of persons "acting, or assuming to act" on Her Majesty's behalf, "in the suppression of the said rebellion, or for the prevention of further disturbances." This statute, however, was restricted in its application to Upper Canada, and the subject, so far as the eastern section of the Province was concerned, was allowed to remain in abeyance until February, 1845, when the Assembly passed an Address to Sir Charles Metcalfe, praying that his Excellency would be pleased to cause proper measures to be adopted "in order to insure to the inhabitants of that part of this Province formerly Lower Canada, indemnity for just losses during the rebellion of 1837 and 1838." The prayer was granted, and Commissioners were appointed to enquire into the losses sustained by "Her Majesty's loyal subjects, in that part of the Province of Canada which formerly constituted the Province of Lower Canada, during the late unnatural rebellion, . . and arising and growing out of the said rebellion." The Commissioners were instructed to distinguish the cases of persons who had joined or aided the rebellion from those who had not. In attempting to act upon these instructions the Commissioners soon found themselves in difficulties, and applied, through their secretary, for information as to how the distinction was to be made. This was on the 11th of February, 1846. Earl Cathcart had succeeded to the post of Governor-General. It will be remembered that Mr. Draper's Government were then in power, and that they stood sorely in need of French Canadian support. They felt that this subject of rebellion losses was a dangerous one, and they were doubtful as to what was the wisest policy for them to adopt with respect to it. They accordingly temporised. The Provincial Secretary was instructed to reply to the secretary to the Commission to the effect that it was not his Excellency's intention that the Commissioners "should be guided by any other description of evidence than that furnished by the sentences of the Courts of Law;" that the

Commissioners had no power to call for either persons or papers; that they must be satisfied with such general evidence as the claimants might produce; and that they were intended to obtain merely a general estimate of the rebellion losses, "the particulars of which," it was added, "must form the subject of minute enquiry hereafter under legislative authority."

The report of the Commissioners was rendered on the 18th of April, 1846, while Parliament was in session. It set forth that the want of power on the part of the Commission to proceed to a strict and regular investigation had compelled them to trust to the allegations of the claimants, and that it was from these data alone, and the general inferences to be drawn therefrom, that they had been able to form even an approximate estimate of the sums requisite to cover the amount of damages sustained. A schedule was appended to the report, exhibiting a list of 2,176 persons, claiming sums amounting to £241,965; but an opinion was expressed that £100,000 would be sufficient to meet all meritorious claims. Sums amounting in the aggregate to £25,503 were actually claimed by persons who had been condemned by court-martial as having been concerned in the insurrection.

Now, the only purpose which the Draper Government could hope to effect by proceeding any farther in the matter of rebellion losses was to gain French Canadian support. It had by this time become doubtful whether such support was to be had by that Government at any price. The temporising policy was therefore persisted in. An Act was passed providing for the payment of the balance due on certain Lower Canadian rebellion claims which had been investigated and recognised before the Union, but the whole amount involved was only £9,986, and the main question was left untouched. As the French Canadians yielded no support to the Government they were not in a position to bring any pressure to bear, and nothing more was done in the way of compensating rebellion losses in the lower

section of the Province until the period at which the narrative has arrived—the session of 1849.

The circumstances had of course undergone a great change. A Reform Government, in which French Canadian influence was very strong, had succeeded to power. French Canadians felt that they had been deprived of their rightful share in the administration of affairs ever since the Union, and now that their time had arrived they did not scruple to push their influence to its utmost length. A clamour had arisen from one end of Lower Canada to the other on the subject of compensation for rebellion losses in that section of the Province, and legislation could no longer be postponed. The Ministry, strong as they were, could not have resisted the pressure brought to bear upon them, even had they been so disposed. Had they displayed any hesitation at dealing with the subject, Mr. Papineau would have availed himself of such an opportunity to raise a tumult about their ears. Such a tumult would have been fatal to their influence. But they neither displayed nor felt any such hesitation. It was not only their interest but their bounden duty to redeem the virtual pledge which had been given by the Tory Government to the people of Lower Canada. It was incumbent upon them to take up the work "left half done by their predecessors." * Early in the session Mr. Lafontaine introduced into the Assembly a series of resolutions on the subject, which, with some slight amendments, were speedily passed. A Bill founded on these resolutions was next introduced. It was intituled "An Act to provide for the Indemnification of parties in Lower Canada whose property was destroyed during the Rebellion in the years 1837 and 1838." The preamble set forth that "in order to redeem the pledge given to the sufferers of such losses, . . it is necessary and just that the particulars of such losses, not yet paid and satisfied, should form the subject of more minute enquiry under

* Walrond, p. 73.

legislative authority, and that the same, so far only as they may have arisen from the total or partial, unjust, unnecessary or wanton destruction of dwellings, buildings, property and effects, . . should be paid and satisfied." It was provided that none of the persons who had been convicted of treason during the rebellion, or who, having been committed to custody, had submitted to Her Majesty's will, and been transported to Bermuda, should be entitled to any indemnity. Provision was made for the appointment of five Commissioners for carrying out the Act, and a sum of £100,000 was appropriated for payment of claims. Such was the bombshell which Mr. Lafontaine cast upon the floor of the Assembly.

The outcry from the Opposition was immediate and furious. They contended that in all previous legislation on the subject the indemnity had been restricted to "*loyal* inhabitants," whereas in the Bill now before the House there was nothing to prevent any rebel from claiming and receiving compensation for his losses, unless he had actually been convicted or banished to Bermuda. It was notorious that not a tithe of those who had been actively engaged in the insurrection had been arrested. What was to prevent any or all of those persons from putting in their claims, and being recompensed for their own treason? A "rebel Government," it was said, had succeeded to power, to the displacement of loyal subjects. What more natural, it was asked, than that such a Government should put a premium upon treason by seeking to reward rebels? Argument of this sort told upon the country at large. The excitement was by no means confined to members of Parliament, nor to the city of Montreal, though, owing to the latter being the seat of Government, the outcry was louder there than elsewhere. The rage of the Opposition grew from day to day, and by the time the measure came up for a second reading it had become absolutely ferocious.

Nor was their hot anger greatly to be wondered at. More than

thirty-two years have passed since that disturbed period, and surely it is possible at this distance of time to look at the matter dispassionately from both sides. It must at once be conceded that the Rebellion Losses Bill of 1849 was a wise and statesmanlike measure: a measure calculated to dissolve long-standing prejudices, and to heal old wounds which had not yet closed. There had been much wanton and cruel destruction of property during the rebellion. After the lapse of so many years it was not always easy to decide whether the person aggrieved had been an actual rebel or not. Moreover, a full amnesty had just been granted, and it would have been most injudicious to partially nullify that act of clemency by discriminating between claimants, unless where the latter had been regularly convicted by due course of law. To have done so would have been to open the way to many evil consequences, of which perjury and detraction would have been among the greatest. It would have been wiser to leave the question altogether untouched than to have prohibited all but approved loyal subjects from participating in the compensation. All this seems perfectly clear at the present day. But it was hardly to be expected that the Tory loyalists would view the question in that light in 1849. They had been trained to regard the dignity and power of the Crown as of more importance than the liberty of the subject. They admitted no justification for the risings of 1837-'38. According to their creed, a man who rebelled against the authority of the Sovereign, no matter under what provocation, was a dangerous criminal whose death or banishment was imperatively required in the public interest. A rebel was only a degree worse than a blasphemer or an infidel. Their own loyalty had been fully attested, and they conceived that it had been very inadequately recompensed. Scarcely had the Union been consummated ere "rebels" had been admitted to power, and had become the trusty counsellors of royalty's representative in Canada. After the lapse of a few brief years a still higher premium had been placed

upon rebellion by the advent to power of a Government in which the "rebel" element was paramount. A rumour had soon afterwards got abroad that the "rebel Ministry" would introduce a measure to recompense the Lower Canadian rebels for the losses sustained by them in consequence of their own rebellion.* The rumour now received verification under their own eyes. Under such circumstances, was it reasonable to expect that they would either sanction the proposed measure or quietly submit to its imposition? No fair-minded man will hesitate to answer this question in the negative, and had they restricted their opposition to constitutional means no permanent stigma would have rested upon them. Unfortunately for their fame, they resorted to methods for which no defence can be offered; while they at the same time brought such obloquy upon their party as a whole that it soon ceased to have a coherent existence. The events of April, 1849, sounded the death-knell of Canadian high Toryism.

The debates on the subject were the most exciting in our Parliamentary annals. There was hardly a member of the Assembly but took part in them. It soon became evident that there was at any rate no intention on the part of the advocates of the Bill to *exclude* rebels from compensation. Some of the speakers, including several members of the Government, went so far as to defend the payment of rebels on the ground that it was inexpedient to enquire who were, or who were not, rebels. The Hon. Malcolm Cameron, Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, expressed a hope that there would be no Star Chamber scrutiny as to whether a man was loyal or not. "The question," pursued the honourable gentleman, "is not whether

* Had the Draper Government proceeded with their measure while they were in power they would doubtless have experienced precisely the same difficulties as beset the Lafontaine-Baldwin Government in 1849. If they had discriminated between loyal subjects and unconvicted rebels the measure would have been a dead letter in Lower Canada, and the French Canadians would have been furious. If they had not so discriminated their Upper Canadian supporters would have opposed them, just as they opposed the Bill in 1849, and for the same reason.

a man is loyal, but whether property has wantonly been destroyed. The people of Upper Canada are satisfied to pay." Mr. Hincks, Inspector-General, spoke to the same effect.* Mr. Baldwin, Attorney-General West, remarked that after an Act of Amnesty it would be disrespectful to Her Majesty, and an outrage on the man seeking compensation, to enquire what part he took at the time of the troubles. Mr. Merritt, President of the Council, said: "A general amnesty has been proclaimed, and can we draw an odious and invidious distinction at this late day, to create dissatisfaction? We trust all are now good and loyal subjects. It is our duty to keep them so, and not disturb the harmony which prevails. From the results of my own experience, I feel it would be very difficult to draw delicate distinctions between those called loyal and disloyal." Mr. Drummond, Solicitor-General East, declared that it was not the business of the House to say who were guilty of high treason, for the Amnesty Act had done away with all that. In technical language, the persons pardoned were in the same position as before. There is no need to multiply illustrations. It soon came to be generally understood that in the consideration of claims, no distinction would be drawn between those of rebels and those of loyal subjects, unless there had been actual conviction or banishment to Bermuda.

The Opposition put forth all their strength. Mr. Sherwood, Sir Allan MacNab, Colonel Prince—who, as might have been expected,

* Mr. Hincks spoke with still less ambiguity in a circular issued by him while the debates were in progress, and subsequently published as an *extra* to the *Montreal Pilot;* as witness the following extracts:—"It may happen that parties were engaged in the rebellion who were never convicted of high treason, and who therefore *would not be excluded under the Act.* I believe the amount of such claims would be very small in proportion to the whole amount; and it would be very injudicious indeed were the Legislature, for the sake of excluding them, to sanction a false principle, and to allow any set of Commissioners to decide arbitrarily that men were rebels who had never been convicted of high treason. . . It is not proposed to pay a shilling to any individual who has been convicted of high treason; but in dealing with the question it is impossible to determine who were and who were not rebels."—See *Montreal Pilot Extra,* 26th February, 1849.

was a veritable "Thorough" on this question—Colonel Gugy, and all the leading members brought their utmost eloquence to bear upon the question, and did not scruple to give utterance to the passions which dominated them. Sir Allan went beyond himself in his vehemence, and stigmatized the entire French Canadian people as rebels and aliens. On the ministerial side powerful harangues were made by Messieurs Lafontaine, Baldwin, Hincks, Price, Boulton and others. But the speech *par excellence* was made by Mr. Blake, Solicitor-General West. How far such an address was wise or prudent under the circumstances may perhaps be open to question. It intensified the fury of the Opposition, and there can be no doubt that it made for the speaker bitter and life-long enemies. But it is probably not going too far to say that no speech ever delivered in a Canadian Parliament produced a more intense impression upon the hearers. In that tumultuous effort the pent-up wrath and indignation of fifteen years found vent. The state of the Province at and immediately before the time of the rebellion, and the manifold mischiefs wrought by Sir Francis Head, were graphically reviewed. The baneful effects of the domination of the Family Compact were depicted in lurid colours, and the system pursued by the oligarchy was denounced in such language as only a man of strong feelings can command. Lord Durham was defended against certain expressions of Sir Allan MacNab; and some of the acts and utterances of the gentleman last-named were ridiculed in such a fashion that the House was several times convulsed with laughter at the gallant knight's expense. As the telling periods rolled on, the Assembly became spell-bound, and all felt that they were listening to a speech destined to live in our Provincial history. Sir Allan, as mentioned above, had stigmatized the French Canadians as rebels. Mr. Blake now undertook to show that there is such a thing as rebellion against the constitution, as well as rebellion against the Crown, and that the Compact to which Sir Allan

belonged had for years violated the principles of the constitution. "That loyalty," said the speaker, "which is ever ready to extend and strengthen the prerogative of the Crown by stinting and limiting the liberties of the people, is not loyalty, but slavery. It cannot result in strengthening the connection of this country with England, but must tend to weaken the allegiance of the people of this Province by depriving them of their rights as British subjects. . . I am not come here to learn lessons of loyalty from honourable gentlemen opposite. Loyalty to my Queen is the strongest and dearest feeling of my heart, and I trust my arm shall never be wanting when its aid may be required. . . But I confess I have no sympathy with the would-be loyalty of honourable gentlemen opposite, which, while it at all times affects peculiar zeal for the prerogative of the Crown, is ever ready to sacrifice the liberty of the subject. That is not British loyalty; it is the spurious loyalty which at all periods of the world's history has lashed humanity into rebellion. . . The expression 'rebel' has been applied by the gallant knight opposite to some gentlemen on this side of the House, but I tell gentlemen on the other side that their public conduct has proved that *they* are the rebels to their constitution and country." By this time the Opposition were worked up to an explosive point. Sir Allan, his countenance ablaze, sprang to his feet and burst out with: "If the honourable member means to apply the word 'rebel' to me, I must tell him that he asserts what is false."* He then, through the Speaker, called upon Mr. Blake to retract, which that gentleman peremptorily refused to do. Then ensued a scene of wild confusion. Some occupants of the galleries had been so wrought upon by the speech that they could not restrain themselves, and proceeded to discuss the question on their own account. Several breaches of the peace occurred almost simultaneously, and a cry

* The various reports conflict as to the actual words made use of by Sir Allan. Their purport was as stated in the text.

arose from the body of the House requesting the Speaker to have the galleries cleared. The two Solicitors-General cried out, "No, no, don't clear the galleries." Mr. Hincks protested against the House being controlled by a mob, and demanded that the Speaker should forthwith exercise his authority. That official accordingly ordered that the galleries should be cleared, which was done, the ladies hurriedly taking refuge in the body of the House. Several arrests were made ere the galleries were effectually emptied. The House sat with closed doors for about twenty minutes, and then adjourned for the day. A hostile meeting between Sir Allan and Mr. Blake was only prevented by the prompt interference of the Sergeant-at-arms.

It is unnecessary to trace the progress of the measure through Parliament. It passed the third reading in the Assembly on the 9th of March, by a majority of forty-seven to eighteen. In the Legislative Council it passed its third reading on the 15th, by a majority of twenty to fourteen. For some weeks before it thus received the sanction of both Houses, the Opposition had availed themselves of the opportunity of turning the measure to party purposes, and Tory petitions against it had been pouring in from all parts of the country. Most of these were addressed, not to either House of Parliament, or to the Home Government, but to the Governor-General. They were all conceived in the same spirit, and prayed either that the Bill might be reserved for Imperial sanction or that Parliament might be dissolved.

The Governor's position was not an enviable one. He clearly understood that the object of the petitioners in addressing himself personally was to place him in collision with Parliament. As for the Bill itself, he does not seem to have had much sympathy with it. So far as his own feelings were concerned, he regretted that public funds should be diverted from what he regarded as more useful purposes. He nevertheless fully recognised the necessity for

the introduction of the measure by the existing Government—a necessity imposed upon them by their predecessors.* He carefully read every petition which reached his hands. Perceiving how much was at stake, he determined to do nothing rashly. He postponed his decision until he had pondered the matter in all its bearings. The result of his deliberations was to convince him that his course was clear. To dissolve Parliament would be absurd. The present House of Assembly was only fifteen months old. Its members had been elected by virtue of a writ issued under the auspices of the party now in Opposition. Yet the measure petitioned against had been passed by the Assembly by a majority of more than two to one. There was no shadow of ground for believing that a new election would result in a change of Ministry, or in any material change of public opinion. There were, moreover, serious objections to reserving the Bill, although his Excellency well knew that he would be supported in so doing by public opinion in Great Britain. The measure relating to rebellion losses in Upper Canada had not been reserved, and precedent was therefore against such a course. This consideration alone would probably not have had much weight with so clear and independent a thinker as Lord Elgin, but it was a serviceable adjunct to a more weighty and manly reason. "By reserving the Bill," wrote his Lordship, "I should only throw upon Her Majesty's Government, or (as it would appear to the popular eye here) on Her Majesty herself, a responsibility which rests, and ought, I think, to rest, on my own shoulders. If I pass the Bill, whatever mischief ensues may probably be repaired, if the worst comes to the

* "The Tory party," wrote Lord Elgin, in the middle of March, "are doing what they can by menace, intimidation and appeals to passion, to drive me to a *coup d'état*. And yet the very measure which is at this moment the occasion of so loud an outcry is nothing more than a strict logical following out of their own acts. It is difficult to conceive what the address on the subject of rebellion losses in Lower Canada, unanimously voted by the House of Assembly while Lord Metcalfe was Governor and Mr. Draper minister, and the proceedings of the Administration upon that address, could have been meant to lead to, if not to such a measure as the present Government have introduced."—*Walrond*, p. 75.

worst, by the sacrifice of me." * Imperial interests, moreover, were not concerned, and there was no justification for reserving the Bill. To do so would be to emulate Sir Charles Metcalfe's example, and to trample upon the principles of Responsible Government. An analysis of the votes put the constitutional aspect of the question in a very clear light. The number of Upper Canadian members who voted on the third reading was thirty-one, of whom seventeen voted for, and fourteen against it. In Lower Canada the French Canadians, of course, were all in favour of the Bill. In addition to the French Canadian members from that Province there were ten of British origin, and of these six voted for, and four against it. This was a sort of logic against which it was vain to argue, and Lord Elgin, after long and careful consideration, determined to assent to the Bill.

* Walrond, p. 78.





Chapter XXVII.

THE BURSTING OF THE STORM.

"The Paris mobs, in the midst of revolution and anarchy, respected public buildings, the libraries, and works of art; and it remained for the Vandalism of Montreal rioters to inflict a public injury on themselves, of a character adopted by the Saracens and Huns, and other barbarians of the middle ages, to punish their enemies."—MacMullen's *History of Canada*, p. 509.



PON the opening of the Assembly at three o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 25th of April, the amended Customs Bill came up for its third reading. By this Bill various important amendments to the tariff were introduced, and it was very desirable that it should be passed without delay. Navigation had opened earlier than usual, and some of the early spring vessels had already entered the St. Lawrence. If they were permitted to enter the port of Quebec before the new Act became law, their cargoes would only be liable to the duties imposed under the old tariff; and this would be an injustice to the owners of cargoes arriving subsequently, when the new Act should have come into operation. The Inspector-General, Mr. Hincks, pressed these matters upon the attention of the Assembly, adding that if the measure were at once passed by the two Houses his Excellency would come down and assent to it in the course of the afternoon. The Bill was accordingly read a third time and passed without opposition, whereupon it was sent up to the Legislative Council. That body at once suspended the rules, and hurried the Bill through its various stages. The Governor's assent was now all that was necessary to give effect to it. The Upper House adjourned

"during pleasure," and awaited the arrival of his Excellency, who a few minutes later entered the Council Chamber attended by his staff. The members of the Assembly were summoned, and immediately upon their arrival the Governor gave his assent, not only to the Customs Act, but to forty-one others, including that relating to the rebellion losses. A rumour had got abroad to the effect that the Governor's assent would be given to the last-named measure in the course of the day, and the galleries were packed by persons bitterly opposed to the ministerial policy.

No sooner had the obnoxious Bill received the royal assent than a tumult arose in the galleries in consequence of the sudden rising and departure of a number of well-dressed and apparently respectable persons, who made a good deal of unnecessary noise by shouting and stamping on the stairs. Little attention was paid to this exhibition of ill-temper, and his Excellency, having completed the business in hand, left the Chamber, and proceeded to his carriage. No sooner had he emerged from the front entrance to the building than he encountered a storm of hisses, groans, and offensive epithets. A crowd of persons had collected, conspicuous among whom were those who had just vacated the galleries of the Council Chamber. A few cheers were raised by friendly voices in the crowd, but there was a large preponderance of hostile demonstrations. The Governor's situation was not an enviable one, but he retained an outward appearance of equanimity, and moved on, distributing bows and smiles in response to the few amicable salutations which greeted his ears. A few moments more, and he had reached his carriage in safety. Then hostilities began to assume a more active and offensive form. The groans became deeper and more ominous; the hisses louder and more prolonged. As the vehicle rolled away it was pelted with addled eggs and other offensive missiles which had evidently been brought for the purpose. It was soon beyond range, and its occupants were found to have sustained no bodily injury, though his

Excellency keenly felt the gross insults to which he and his staff had been subjected. He repaired at once to Monklands.

Meanwhile the Assembly continued in session, though the city had begun to exhibit symptoms of excitement in various quarters. A printed notice calling a meeting in the Champ de Mars for eight o'clock in the evening was circulated, and at the hour appointed a large crowd assembled at that place. Lights were displayed, and several persons of good social standing proceeded to deliver inflammatory speeches. The mob were just in the humour for any act of desperation, and the speakers who thus goaded them on incurred a very serious moral responsibility. As the mass of humanity surged to and fro, ever and anon a cry was heard: "To the Parliament House! To Monklands! Down with Lord Elgin!" The crisis arrived when one of the orators of the evening concluded his remarks by an injunction to the mob to "Give three cheers for the Queen, and then go and take a walk!" The request did not need repetition. A loud shout was raised: "To the House of Assembly!" and the crowd hurried off in that direction. On the way they passed the office of the *Pilot*, which was the ministerial organ in Montreal. Voices were heard enjoining the crowd to fire the building, but instantly afterwards other voices called out, "No, no; the buildings on each side belong to Tories!" The latter cry doubtless saved the *Pilot* office from being burned to the ground there and then. Having wreaked their vengeance by smashing every pane of glass in the front windows, the crowd swept on, and soon reached their destination. The Assembly were sitting in Committee discussing the Judicature Bill for Lower Canada, unconscious of what was in store for them. Their deliberations were suddenly interrupted by a succession of roars that seemed to split the air, accompanied by a shower of stones, brickbats, sticks, and other more offensive missiles. The destructive hail crashed through the windows on both sides, for the Chamber overlooked two streets. The members hastily took

refuge in the lobbies, and behind the Speaker's chair. When the windows had been well riddled the mob changed the base of their operations, and forced their way into the building. They soon reached the Assembly Chamber, and proceeded to wreak their vengeance on the furniture. Chandeliers, globes and lamps were smashed to atoms. The table was overturned, and the legs were wrenched from their places. Benches were torn asunder and thrown in a heap. One ruffian seated himself in the Speaker's chair, and in sonorous mock-heroics, proclaimed the dissolution of Parliament. He was disturbed by his fellow-rioters, who tore him from his seat, which was then kicked over and smashed. The mace, which had cost three hundred pounds, was wrenched from the hands of Mr. Chisholm, the Serjeant-at-arms, who made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to retain the insignia of authority. It was carried down to the street, whence, after having been freely passed from hand to hand among the crowd, it was conveyed to the Donegani hotel, and deposited in the room occupied by Sir Allan MacNab.

While the work of destruction was thus going on, a cry of "Fire!" was raised, and it was found that the balcony at the western end of the building was in flames. About the same time a blaze was discovered in the Legislative Council Chamber. There can be no doubt that both these fires had been deliberately kindled by the rioters, who, after the manner of all rioters, had become drunk with excitement, and possessed by a mania for destruction. The flames in the Council Chamber were easily extinguished, but those in the balcony rapidly spread to the adjoining rooms, and swept everything before them. It was soon evident that the entire building was doomed. Then, for the first time, law-abiding citizens began to comprehend the gravity of the situation, and directed their attention to the saving of part of the valuable library of the Assembly. But it was too late to save anything of importance. The flames spread with such terrible rapidity that in a very few minutes the entire building

was one burning mass. About a hundred volumes were preserved out of nearly twenty thousand. The smaller library of the Upper House was totally consumed. A magnificent full-length portrait of Her Majesty, for which $2,000 had been paid, was conveyed in safety down the stairway, but had no sooner reached the street than a ruffian ran a stick through the canvas. In this mutilated condition it was conveyed to the Donegani hotel.* But the most serious calamity arose from the destruction of all the public records of both Upper and Lower Canadian Parliaments, as well as of those of the Provincial Parliament since the Union. Such a loss as this was of course irreparable, and inflicted great and permanent injury upon the Province at large. The most valuable materials for our history were forever destroyed. The pecuniary loss was at least as great as the amount which had been appropriated for the payment of rebellion losses. Among the few important documents preserved were the Bills which had been sanctioned by the Governor a few hours before, including the measure which had been made the pretext for the riot.†

The troops had been summoned as soon as the mob had started from the Champ de Mars, but for some unexplained reason they did not arrive on the spot until it was too late for their presence to be of any great service. Several fire engines had reached the ground some

* This unfortunate portrait was destined to encounter further vicissitudes. It remained at the Donegani hotel for several months, when the building was burned down. The framework being heavy and cumbrous, and the progress of the fire being very rapid, the canvas was hurriedly cut from the frame, and the painting once more saved from destruction. It was subsequently repaired, and accompanied the seat of Government in its perambulations until the latter found a final resting-place at Ottawa. It now hangs in the Senate Chamber, facing the Throne.

† "The buildings destroyed were originally designed for a market-house, but were leased to the Government for £2,500 per annum when the seat of Government was changed from Kingston. The original cost was £30,000. The fittings and the furniture belonged to the Province, and were very valuable. The library was insured for £12,000 by the Government, and the buildings by the Corporation for £18,000; but neither of these amounts will be paid, the fire having been intentional."—See *Toronto Globe* correspondence, written by Mr. J. Gordon Brown.

time before, but they had been taken possession of by the mob, until the fire had made too much headway to be got under. The building was a total ruin, and several other structures in the neighbourhood barely escaped a similar fate. The conflagration lighted up the entire city, and there was little sleep for the inhabitants of Montreal on that wild night. A Cabinet Council was held while the glare of the flames yet illumined the sky, and arrangements were made for the meeting of the Assembly on the following morning in the Bonsecours market. Prompt measures were taken for the punishment of the ringleaders, several of whom were forthwith arrested and lodged in gaol.

The Assembly met, as agreed upon, at ten o'clock in the morning of the 26th, in the hall of the Bonsecours market, an immense room with bare walls. A few benches were obtained for the members, and the spectators stood around to listen to the proceedings. The Speaker having taken the chair, Mr. Baldwin moved the appointment of a special committee to replace current Bills and such other papers as might be necessary to enable the House to proceed with the legislation of the session. Sir Allan MacNab and other ultra Tories, referring to the riots, blamed the Government rather than the populace, and one of them even went so far as to declare that the Rebellion Losses Bill was a sufficient justification, even for the destruction of the Parliament House. Persons of more moderate opinions, however, united in speaking of the disasters of the preceding night in fitting terms. Mr. John Wilson, member for London, a Conservative, expressed great disgust at the language of members who could attempt to palliate such acts as had occurred. Mr. Badgley spoke to the same purport, and declared his determination to stand by the Government in such an emergency. Mr. Blake availed himself of the opportunity to comment once more upon the quality of that "loyalty" of which the House had heard so much—that loyalty which one day incited a mob to pelt the Governor-

General and to destroy the Halls of Parliament and the public records, and on the next day sought to find excuses for anarchy, and to throw further difficulties in the way of the authorities. Mr. Baldwin's motion was carried, and the committee at once proceeded with the work assigned to them.

The city continued in a disturbed state throughout the day. A crowd collected about the market where the Assembly was sitting, and ever and anon gave utterance to hoots and howls. Supporters of the Government were grossly insulted in the streets, and in some instances subjected to bodily maltreatment. Mr. Holmes, one of the members for Montreal, upon emerging from the Assembly-room for a breath of fresh air, was knocked down and hustled back into the building. Mr. Lafontaine himself was furiously attacked, and had to be guarded to a cab by the military. After nightfall the evil passions of the mob burst forth with redoubled fury. Assaults were first made on the private residences of Mr. Hincks and Mr. Holmes. The windows were battered in, and the feasibility of setting the buildings on fire was discussed. The close proximity of houses belonging to Tories was again urged as a reason for abstaining from incendiarism, and again the plea was successful. Then the mob betook themselves to a house on St. Antoine Street, where Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Price lodged. Having smashed the windows, and shrieked out all sorts of obscene and offensive epithets against the occupants, they next proceeded to a fine new house which had just been purchased by Mr. Lafontaine in the same street. The family were not then in residence, and were thus spared the pain of witnessing the destruction that ensued. The fruit trees were cut down; the stables were set on fire; and as soon as the blaze had got well under way the mob burst into the house, where they wreaked their vengeance upon the fine and costly furniture. Everything destructible was smashed to fragments. Mr. Lafontaine had a fine library of several thousand volumes which he

had spent years in collecting. Many volumes were bibliographical rarities which could not be replaced. The collection was completely wrecked by the Vandals. Having dismantled the establishment, they were just proceeding to fire the building when the military arrived and drove them off. The base of operations was then changed to Dr. Nelson's house, where the same *rôle* would doubtless have been repeated, but the military were by this time on the alert, and dispersed the incendiaries before they had time to do more than riddle the windows with stones. This closed the chapter of calamities for the night, so far as the main body of rioters was concerned, though smaller bodies had meanwhile been occupying themselves in smashing the windows of various other prominent supporters of the Government.

On the morning of the following day, which was Friday, the 27th, a handbill was posted about the city calling a meeting of "the friends of peace" on the Champ de Mars, for two o'clock in the afternoon. At that time a great crowd assembled, but, as might have been anticipated, "the friends of peace" formed a very small proportion of the assemblage. The Hon. George Moffatt, Colonel Gugy, and other Tories delivered speeches in which the people were called upon to preserve order; but an address to Her Majesty praying for the recall of Lord Elgin and the disallowance of the obnoxious Bill was passed. At the close of the proceedings the crowd dispersed without resorting to any further excesses. Objections having been made to the further discharge of police duties by the military, about a thousand French and Irish constables were sworn in to preserve order. They were armed with pistols and cutlasses, and stationed in front of the temporary House of Assembly, where they were drilled by Colonel Taché. By way of furthur precaution, more troops were summoned from the nearest military stations. In the course of the evening the mob again collected in great numbers in the Champ de Mars, but they were overawed by

the proximity of the troops and special constables, and did not venture upon any further excesses.

But the reign of King Mob was not yet over. Next day, the 28th, an address to the Governor was moved in the Assembly, in which the justice and impartiality which had characterized his Excellency's Government, under the late Administration as well as under the existing one, were fully recognized. Deep sorrow and indignation were expressed at the recent disgraceful proceedings, and assurances were conveyed of cordial support for any measure which his Excellency might deem necessary for the preservation of peace. Several amendments were moved by the Opposition, and there was a strong endeavour on their part to modify the terms of the motion. The address finally passed by a majority of thirty-six to sixteen, and arrangements were made for his Excellency to receive it on Monday, the 30th, at "Government House," a building on Notre Dame Street, where the Government offices were kept. In compliance with these arrangements, Lord Elgin, who had not left Monklands since his return thither from Montreal on the 25th, drove into the city on the 30th. He was accompanied by several members of his suite, and escorted by a troop of volunteer dragoons. He had no sooner entered the city than he saw reason to apprehend further disturbances. Insults fell upon his ears, and several harmless but offensive missiles were hurled at the escort. As he approached the chief commercial thoroughfares the clamour increased, and for some minutes before reaching Government House he found himself surrounded by a hostile and violent mob. He was at first assailed by oaths and execrations, and soon after by stones and rotten eggs. A stone of two pounds weight descended upon the carriage, and was preserved by the Governor as a memento of the occasion. The members of the Assembly who repaired to the place appointed to present the address were assailed in like manner, stones being thrown at them over the heads of the troops

who accompanied them for their protection. A magistrate proceeded to read the Riot Act, but had scarcely begun ere the order was given to the troops to charge. The order was promptly obeyed, but the crowd fell back as promptly, and no damage was done. The rioters cheered the soldiers heartily, as though to prove that their hostility was directed against Lord Elgin and the Government, and not against the troops who were only obeying orders. Lord Elgin meanwhile remained perfectly calm and collected, and gave no sign of his consciousness of the riot beyond putting up his hands to protect his face from being battered by the missiles which flew around him. Having reached his destination he got down from his carriage and entered the building, where he received and replied to the address. Shouts continued to make themselves heard, and the crowd again closed in near the troops. It was deemed advisable that his Excellency should leave the city by a different route. Accordingly, instead of passing along Notre Dame Street, he directed his course towards Sherbrooke Street, and thus doubled upon the mob. The latter soon discovered the ruse, and set off after the Vice-regal carriage in hot haste. Shouts of "Down with the Governor-General!" rent the air, and law and order once more seemed to be at an end. The Governor's carriage was driven along with great rapidity, but the mob pressed "cabs, caleches, and everything that would run"* into their service, and overtook his Lordship at Molson's corner. A furious attack with stones was made on the flying vehicle, the back of which was driven in. Erelong the Vice-regal party were clear of the mob, and were able to estimate damages. The Governor himself had escaped unhurt, but his brother, Colonel Bruce, had received a wound on the back of his head from a stone thrown at the carriage. Colonel Ermatinger, Chief of Police, and Captain Jones, who had charge of the escort, had also received slight bodily injuries. "In this sad

* See Montreal *Herald* extra, Monday, April 30th, 1849.

manner," says a contemporary account, "did his Lordship depart from the capital of Her British Majesty's possessions in North America."* He repaired to Monklands, and did not again enter the city for many months.

Next morning active preparations were made for further tumult. Information had reached the city that a deputation consisting of eight gentlemen had embarked on the steamer at Quebec for Montreal on the previous night, with the intention of waiting on Lord Elgin with an address of condolence. This was regarded by the Montreal mob as a step on the part of Quebec to induce the removal of the seat of Government to that place. An immense crowd congregated at the wharf to await the steamer's arrival. The authorities also made preparations. The troops were called out and paraded near the wharf to preserve order. The fury of the mob was roused, and there would doubtless have been warm work if the deputation had been on board; but upon the arrival of the steamer it became known that the eight Quebec gentlemen had taken the precaution to disembark at St. Mary's Current, two miles below. The crowd accordingly gave three cheers for the troops, and then quietly dispersed.

The Government did not escape censure, even from their own supporters, for not having made preparation for this miniature rebellion; and still greater fault was found with them for not having promptly and effectually suppressed it with the strong hand. The Ministry, however, were taken completely by surprise, and the best defence that can be made for them is that the outbreak was not one that could have been foreseen. True, the feeling evoked by the discussion on the subject of rebellion losses was very warm, and while the measure was under consideration in the Assembly the Opposition press indulged in much violent and menacing language; language which, read in the light of subsequent events, would seem

* See Montreal *Herald* extra, Monday, April 30th, 1849.

to have been of a kind to put the Government on their guard. But violent and menacing language had long been characteristic of the party press of Canada. It was not confined to the press of any party, or of any particular locality. Its most rabid utterances, however, were, for the most part, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," and were generally taken for what they were worth. Moreover, according to the best opinion that can now be formed, the riots were wholly fortuitous—the mere outgrowth of the disturbed state of public feeling in Montreal at the moment, acted upon and intensified by the harangues and example of unwise or unscrupulous partisans. Had the mob not been encouraged and directed in their ruffianism by persons who ought to have known better, there is good reason for believing that there would have been no incendiarism, and no serious rioting. A heavy responsibility rests on those who recklessly wrought upon the evil passions of an excited and ignorant mob. Their conduct was all the more reprehensible inasmuch as they belonged to a class which never wearied of proclaiming their loyalty and devotion to the Crown. The most stinging sentences of Mr. Blake's speech about "spurious Canadian loyalty" received sudden and unexpected confirmation. Loyalty seemed much less alluring in the eyes of these ultra-loyalists when it implied the exclusion from office of their party, and the political ascendency of their opponents.

The other ground upon which the Ministry were taken to task—that they had not checked the riot at its outset by putting down the mob with the strong hand—is one easily dealt with. It is certain that the riot might have been checked with very little delay if the Government had been disposed to exercise their full authority, without regard to consequences. At their bidding the French Canadian populace would have arisen as one man, and would speedily have given such an account of the rioters as would have effectually prevented any further clamour. Then, to say

nothing of the ministerial supporters among the British population, the troops were at the command of the Ministry, and by shooting down a score or two of the populace the streets might soon have been cleared. The Government might have done this. Such a course was urged upon them by many persons whose opinions might have been supposed to have weight with them.* But wiser counsels prevailed. It is excellent to have a giant's strength, says the virtuous Isabella, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant. To have fired upon the mob would have been to intensify the war of races which had already done so much to retard the progress and prosperity of the country. All the benefit in the way of amalgamation which a united Parliament had been able to effect in eight years would have been invalidated. The Governor-General and his Ministers were agreed as to the proper course to be pursued. Unless as a last and inevitable resort, there should be no shedding of blood by authority. "I am prepared to bear any amount of obloquy that may be cast upon me," said the Governor to his secretary, Major Campbell, "but, if I can possibly prevent it, no stain of blood shall rest upon my name."† By some whose souls were too small to enable them to properly appraise such a line of action, the Governor's policy was attributed to pusillanimity and cowardice. The American papers expressed astonishment at his Excellency's forbearance. But the exercise of forbearance was the truest evidence of sagacity, and time has long since done justice to the man who dared to face obloquy and misrepresentation rather than violate his sense of what

*The feeling of many prominent ministerialists is fairly depicted in the following extract from an unpublished letter written by the Hon. John Ross to a friend in Toronto, under date of 9th May, 1849:—"I cannot help thinking, with you, that the Government have shown too much forbearance towards the ruffianly disturbers of the peace in Montreal, and this opinion they have received from me more than once. . . . The daily round of insolence and triumph stamped on the countenances of the rascals here galls me to the quick. If the Ministry would but force on an issue, and shoot down 50 or 60 of them, we should not be as we are."

† Walrond, p. 85.

was right. "Yes, I see it all now," said a gentleman to him many months afterward; "you were right—a thousand times right—though I thought otherwise then. I own that I would have reduced Montreal to ashes before I would have endured half what you did; and I should have been justified, too." "Yes," replied Lord Elgin, "you would have been justified, because your course would have been perfectly defensible; but it would not have been the best course. Mine was a better one."* Owing to the determination to avoid bloodshed, not a life was lost during the riots immediately consequent upon the Rebellion Losses Bill. Nearly four months later, as will be seen, a single life was sacrificed, but not at the instigation of the Government or any individual member of it. Independently of the breaking of a few windows, the only private property destroyed belonged to the Ministers themselves.

The riotous proceedings in Montreal were feebly reëchoed in several towns in Upper Canada, but with these few exceptions the good sense of the people prevailed, notwithstanding the rabid utterances of the most violent portion of the press. Lord Elgin was not long permitted to remain in doubt as to the popular estimate of his conduct in maintaining the principles of Responsible Government. Addresses from all parts of the Province poured in upon him, and their prevailing tone was most gratifying to his feelings. He however deemed it incumbent upon him to tender his resignation to the Colonial Secretary. This was done in the official periphrasis which seems to be a *sine qua non* in communications between high dignitaries in the public service. His Excellency suggested to Lord Grey that if he, the Governor, should be unable to recover that position of "dignified neutrality between contending parties" which he had endeavoured to maintain, it might be a question whether it would not be for the interest of Her Majesty's service that he should be removed, to make way for some one who should have "the

*Walrond, p. 97.

advantage of being personally unobnoxious to any section of Her Majesty's subjects within the Province." * But the Colonial Secretary's reply was very reassuring. It signified approval of Lord Elgin's conduct in the strongest terms, and expressed Her Majesty's anxious wish that he should remain at his post. Having thus received unmistakable evidence that his policy had commended itself to the Home Government, as well as to the great bulk of the Canadian people, his Excellency abandoned all notion of retiring, and gave his best consideration to the important questions which loomed before him.

He was importuned from many quarters to remove the seat of Government from Montreal. The Assembly passed an Address praying him to call Parliament alternately at Toronto and Quebec every four years. He was at the same time doing his utmost to negotiate a reciprocity treaty with the United States. While these and many other subjects were engrossing his mind, the business of the session was quietly proceeded with. After sitting a few days in the hall of the Bonsecours Market, the Assembly found more suitable accommodation in Dalhousie Square, in a large building which had been constructed for a theatre. The Legislative Council took up their quarters in Trinity Church for a few days, after which accommodation was provided for them in the same building, where both Chambers remained until the close of the session.

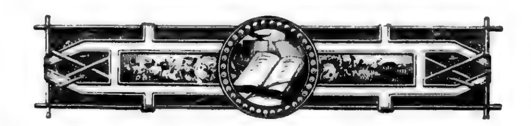
Among the many addresses of which his Excellency was the recipient during this turbulent epoch was one of special note from the people of Toronto. It was signed by no fewer than 2,324 male adults, being nearly half the male adult population of the city. Several gentlemen were specially sent down to Monklands as a deputation to present it to the Governor. They reached their destination on Wednesday, the 10th of May, and acquitted themselves of the object of their mission. The same evening, while they were

* Walrond, p. 86.

attending a ministerial dinner party at Tetu's hotel, in Montreal, another lawless demonstration took place. A mob collected in the street in front of the hotel, and after having given vent to numerous groans and hisses, sent a volley of stones crashing through the windows. Shots were fired from within upon the assailants, several of whom were wounded. The military arrived in time to disperse the mob before any more serious collision could take place; but it was apparent that influences were at work which did not tend to make Montreal a desirable place of residence for the representative of royalty.

Lord Elgin did not attend in person at the prorogation, which took place on the 30th of May. Public feeling in Montreal had not yet quieted down, and there was reason to apprehend further rioting if any excuse therefor were afforded to the mob. His Excellency had already been attacked and grossly insulted twice in his own capital. To submit to a third attack, without punishing the assailants, would have seemed like a degradation of his high office. It would also have been popularly taken as an indication of weakness; a contingency which it was manifestly desirable to avoid. He accordingly, by advice of his Ministers, issued a Commission to Major-General Rowan, Commander of the Forces, who attended at the Legislative Council Chamber at the date indicated, and prorogued Parliament in a short and conciliatory speech. Only a few days previously—on the 16th of the month—a son and heir had been born to the Governor, at Monklands. The little fellow, to whom Her Majesty became godmother, was christened Victor Alexander, and is the present representative of the family honours.





CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTERMATH.

"Within that land was many a malcontent."
LARA, Canto II.



THE rest of the year 1849 was an anxious time for the Governor and his Ministers. A state of more or less excitement continued to prevail throughout the entire Province, though the manifestations of it were much more conspicuous in Montreal than elsewhere. Some of the larger centres of commerce suffered from a visitation of Asiatic cholera, which did not tend to improve the tone of the public mind. After the close of the session the carrying out of the provisions of the Rebellion Losses Bill was proceeded with, and no pains were spared by the Government to effect an equitable distribution of the amount appropriated by the Legislature. The Commissioners who had been deputed by the late Government to enquire into the claims of persons seeking compensation were now re-appointed; and in order to further conciliate Tory susceptibilities, they were directed to construe the Act in the most restricted sense it could be made to bear in favour of loyalists. But in spite of all efforts at conciliation the Tory press kept up the agitation against the Government. Nor was the agitation confined to the press. A British American League, as it was called, was formed at Montreal, with branches at Toronto, Kingston, and elsewhere in Upper Canada. The objects of this association were various, and would seem to have been not always consistent with each other. Persistent opposition

to the existing Government, a return to a protective policy, the election of members of the Legislative Council, and—most important of all—a general union of the British North American Provinces, were among the most conspicuous planks in the platform. A convention of delegates from all parts of the Province was held at Kingston towards the close of July, and an attempt was made to weld the discordant elements of which the association was composed into a harmonious whole. Among the principal speakers were Ogle R. Gowan of Brockville, Henry Sherwood, George Duggan and Philip M. M. S. Vankoughnet of Toronto, George Moffatt and Hugh E. Montgomerie of Montreal, John A. Macdonald and John R. Breckenridge of Kingston, Rolland Macdonald of St. Catharines, Edward Ermatinger of St. Thomas, Edmund Murney of Belleville, and Daniel Gilbert Miller of Woodstock. The convention remained in session for some days, and discussed the political and social aspect of affairs from various points of view. Among other extraordinary matters debated was a proposal by Mr. Gowan to impeach the Governor-General in the House of Lords. But there was too little community of idea among the members to admit of their working effectively together, and nothing came of the movement. Some of the more extreme among them, as will presently be seen, allied themselves with other elements in the population, and proceeded to form a distinct association having objects which would not have been tolerated by the majority of the members of the League.

The riotous proceedings in Montreal and the burning of the Parliament Buildings excited a good deal of feeling in the mother country. The Canadian Tories, with a view to influencing public and Parliamentary opinion there, had sent over Sir Allan MacNab and Mr. Cayley to represent the matter from their point of view. About the same time Mr. Hincks was sent over to counteract their influence, and to transact important business relating to the Provincial finances. The question of the Rebellion Losses Bill was taken

up by both Houses of Parliament. In the Commons the discussion was long and vehement. Among those who spoke in favour of the disallowance of the measure by Her Majesty was Mr. Gladstone, who, however, as was clearly indicated by his remarks, had studied the question from one side only. Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, and other distinguished men defended both the principle of the Bill and the statesmanship which had originated it. The result of the discussion in both Houses was that Lord Elgin's course was fully sustained, and that the eulogies of the most eminent statesmen in the nation were pronounced upon it.

Intelligence of the discussion and its result in due course reached Canada, and had a tranquillising effect on public opinion there. But Montreal was destined to be the scene of a second formidable riot. The conciliatory policy adopted by the Government with respect to the Rebellion Losses Bill was also followed with respect to the persons implicated in the destruction of the Parliament Buildings. There was no disposition to press matters to extremity, and proceedings were deferred until true bills should be found by a grand jury. Owing to the presence of cholera in Montreal, however, no grand jury could be got together during the August term, and the Court adjourned without transacting any business. It was not deemed advisable that the indictments should lie over for three months longer. The accused were accordingly arrested about the middle of August. Bail was forthwith given and accepted, but this did not satisfy the mob, and about nine o'clock on the night of Wednesday, the 15th of the month, they proceeded to make a second attack upon the house of Mr. Lafontaine, who, as Prime Minister, was regarded by them as a legitimate object of their wrath. A rumour had got abroad during the day that such an attack was likely to be made, and a miniature garrison was organized in the house. Some of the assailants, having made themselves hoarse with yells and execrations, forced their way into the yard, whence they proceeded to

enter the building from the rear. The occupants were not disposed to submit tamely to a forcible entry, and, after giving due warning, fired upon the assailants. Several of the latter were wounded, and one, a youth named William Mason, son of a livery-stable keeper, was shot so seriously in the thigh that it was feared he would bleed to death. One of the rioters called out, "The poor fellow is killed!" The mob were roused to murderous fury by this exclamation, and shouts arose: "The blood of a Saxon has been shed by a Frenchman!" For a short time it seemed not unlikely that the house would be destroyed, and that Mr. Lafontaine himself would be torn in pieces. Military assistance, however, opportunely arrived on the scene, and the mob retreated, carrying with them the insensible body of their wounded comrade. The unfortunate youth died early on the following morning. An inquest was subsequently held, and Mr. Lafontaine was by a unanimous verdict acquitted of all blame or responsibility. Great excitement prevailed throughout the city for some days. The funeral was attended by a concourse of people wearing red scarfs and ribbons. It was deemed advisable to close the shops fronting on the streets along which the procession passed. For several successive nights there were disturbances on the streets, accompanied by the extinguishing and smashing of lamps, and similar manifestations of disregard for law. Several fires occurred, and there was reason for believing they were due to incendiaries. The popular fury soon spent itself, and further catastrophes were averted, but these last riotous proceedings convinced both the Governor and his Ministers that it would be unadvisable to retain the seat of Government at Montreal. The city had long since obtained an unenviable notoriety for the turbulent character of its mobs. Many members of Parliament, indeed, had declared before the prorogation that nothing would induce them to return thither for another session. The Assembly, as has been seen, had recommended that the capital should be alternately at

Toronto and Quebec. Lord Elgin himself, notwithstanding the indignities to which he had been subjected at Montreal, had for some months clung to the idea of retaining the seat of Government there. That idea he now felt bound to abandon. The subject required careful deliberation, and it was not till near the end of October that the Governor was able to signify to the Colonial Secretary that the question had been settled. The arrangement was that the remaining two sessions of the existing Parliament should be held at Toronto, after which there should be a transfer to Quebec and Toronto alternately every four years. It was hoped that this plan, by bringing representatives of each of the different nationalities into more intimate relations with the people and institutions of the other, would tend to remove the barriers between the two sections of the Province, and lead the inhabitants to look upon each other as members of the same community, having a common interest in its welfare. The scheme was carried out, and Montreal, by the inconsiderate folly of a few misguided persons, lost the distinction and pecuniary advantages inseparable from the seat of the Provincial Government. The decision thus arrived at was intended as a salutary lesson, not only to Montreal, but to other towns which had shewn a disposition to set the populace above the law.

Nearly two months before the seat of Government question had been definitely settled, his Excellency thought proper to pay a visit to Upper Canada. He left Monklands during the first week of September, and proceeded to Lachine, where he embarked on board a steamer for Prescott, whence he proceeded by another steamer to Niagara, without disembarking at any intermediate port. At Kingston, then one of the great strongholds of Toryism, the Mayor and corporation boarded the steamer and presented his Excellency with a complimentary address, to which the recipient made a suitable reply, but did not go on shore. "Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" had collected at the wharf, and, mingling with other citizens,

indulged in hostile demonstrations against the Governor; but they formed only a small proportion of the crowd, and Lord Elgin did not seem to be in the least moved by their display. His object in proceeding thus direct to the head of the lake was to meet General Zachary Taylor, President of the United States, who was then visiting Niagara, and with whom his Excellency was desirous of conferring with regard to the project of reciprocity which he had so much at heart. He was received with the utmost enthusiasm by the people of the Niagara District, who deluged him with complimentary addresses, and assured him of their confidence and devotion. After remaining a few days in the neighbourhood of the Falls he proceeded westward, and visited all the more important towns. During the entire tour he was attended only by an aide-de-camp and one servant, his object being to prove that he could traverse the Province in safety without any body-guard for his protection. The result fully justified his expectations. He encountered enthusiasm everywhere, and only on two or three occasions was there any manifestation of hostility. At Toronto a few missiles were hurled at him as he was driven along the streets, but they fell wide of their mark, and were merely the last impotent demonstrations of a defeated and disappointed faction.*

* The following extracts from a hitherto unpublished letter written by the Hon. Robert Baldwin to an intimate friend in Toronto, under date of 8th September, 1849, throw much light on the aspect of the seat of Government question, which, it will be borne in mind, was not finally settled until some weeks afterwards:—

"I wrote you a short note the day before yesterday, informing you of the departure of his Excellency, and of his intention of going to the Falls at once, in order to try and meet General Taylor, who was expected there immediately. . I think the citizens of Montreal are becoming very uneasy about the seat of Government question. They have reason to be, for certainly the late renewal of disturbances cannot be considered as increasing their claims to favourable consideration. They were in great hopes his Excellency would have come to town before he went west. His not having done so strikes them as perhaps an indication that he does not mean to come back to them at all. It is true they half flatter themselves that he is going home. Sir Allan has talked oracularly, I suppose, to them on the subject in his letters, and, like all dupes, they interpret the oracle to their own liking. They will be miserably disappointed if that is all they have to rely upon for

The Governor felt much gratified at the result of his tour. "I do not believe," he wrote to a friend, "that the function of the Governor-General under constitutional government, as the moderator between parties, the representative of interests which are common to all the inhabitants of the country, as distinct from those which divide them into parties, was ever so fully and so frankly recognized. I do not believe that I could have achieved this if I had had blood upon my hands." * He moreover had other, if not higher, grounds for self-gratulation. Every mail from England brought out additional evidences of official approval of his policy. Within a short time after completing his tour in the west he received an intimation that he had been raised to the peerage of

the preservation of their metropolitan position. They have some doubts themselves, and are doing all they can to get the people in the west to play their game by insulting the Governor-General there, and are particularly anxious that he should be ill-received at Toronto, Kingston, and Bytown. . . I have reason to believe they are making the most strenuous exertions to accomplish this, appealing to their friends not to desert them, etc., etc. The question then is, will they succeed in getting their friends to make the attempt, and if they do, will the lovers of order of all parties allow it to be successful? If they do, the Montrealers will have reason to chuckle over the gullibility of their western friends. For it is not to be denied that should the Government determine on a removal from Montreal, the regard for order and respect for the representative of the Sovereign that the different places in Upper Canada may shew on the occasion of his Excellency's visit will have a powerful effect in determining the particular place to remove to. In fact, what could I say if, after urging the claims of Toronto, all my previous assurances that *there*, at all events, such insults would either not be offered, or would be put down at once, were to be met by an appeal to recent facts contradicting them? . . . The people of Kingston are more wise. I saw a letter from a gentleman there a day or two ago, in which it was said that, particularly since the return of their delegates from England, they are, all parties of them, setting to work to insure his Excellency a good reception. They say they were misled by their Parliamentary representatives telling them that Lord Elgin had little or no influence in England, and that he would be sure to be recalled. I suppose they are now undeceived in these particulars. Be that as it may, they are at work in earnest. And unless Toronto is equally active and determined, farewell to her hopes. Apart from all other considerations, I am of course, as a Torontonian, most anxious that my native city should not lose the chance that has been thrown in her way of sharing, at least, in metropolitan honours and advantages. And I would willingly do all in my power consistently with my duty to the Province at large to secure her that advantage. . . . Depend upon it, the time is now or never."

* Walrond, p. 96.

the United Kingdom under the title of Baron Elgin of Elgin, an honour which he prized most highly, not merely on account of the dignity itself, but as a proof of the estimation in which his conduct was held at home. No stronger proof could have been given of the change which had come over the spirit of the Imperial Government with respect to their views on colonial relations to the Empire. Only five years had elapsed since Sir Charles Metcalfe had been raised to the peerage for pursuing a course the very reverse of that recently adopted by Lord Elgin. It was another noticeable fact that the policy of the latter's administration had commended itself to the judgment of leading British statesmen of such divergent schools of politics as Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel. It was evident to the Canadian people that the Tory delegates had utterly failed in their mission to England, and that the tactics of the Canadian Opposition were discredited there. This knowledge, combined with the honours to Lord Elgin and the universal condemnation of the violence of the Montreal mob, tended to improve the position of the Canadian Administration both in Upper and Lower Canada. There were many loyal Canadians who were unable to approve of the Rebellion Losses Bill, but an overwhelming majority in the Provincial Parliament had decided in favour of it, and the principles of Responsible Government had by this time attained pretty general assent; so that few were now found to defend the tactics of the leaders of the Opposition in appealing to England against a Canadian Parliamentary majority. As for the Ministry and their supporters, they were not unnaturally jubilant at their success. They regarded the support of Lord Elgin by the Imperial Government as a pledge that that Government would not again tamper with the constitutional rights and privileges of the colony, or vouchsafe their countenance to any Governor who should attempt to do so.

The Government policy was thus completely successful; but, in

view of all the circumstances, it was not to be expected that all difficulties would cease. The commercial depression and the not very encouraging commercial outlook had led many dissatisfied persons to cast about for a remedy for the existing state of affairs. Among other heroic courses of treatment suggested was one involving the annexation of Canada to the United States. For many months past there had been a good deal of discussion on this subject, and some of the leading merchants of Montreal had pronounced emphatically in its favour. It was noticeable that persons of the most opposite political views on domestic questions forgot their differences, and united in their advocacy of this great scheme. During the month of October a manifesto was published at Montreal, in which the wretched condition of the country was depicted in striking and somewhat exaggerated colours. Among the various remedies pointed out were the revival of protection in the markets of the United Kingdom; the protection of home manufactures; a Federal union of the British American Provinces; the independence of the British North American colonies as a Federal republic, and reciprocal free trade with the United States. But the most sweeping remedy of all was the last one suggested, namely, a "friendly and peaceful separation from British connexion, and a union upon equitable terms with the great North American Confederacy of Sovereign States"—in brief, annexation. There was, however, no suggestion of rebellion, or any serious thought of anything so chimerical as separation by force. Sentiments of kindness and respect for the mother country were distinctly professed, and it was declared that separation without the consent of Great Britain was neither practicable nor desirable. The supposed advantages of annexation were enlarged upon, and it was suggested that the mother country would offer no opposition to a step which must necessarily enure so greatly to the benefit of the colonies. This manifesto was signed by many leading citizens of Montreal, including such well-known

names as those of the Torrances, the Redpaths, the Molsons, the Workmans and the Dorions. Luther Hamilton Holton, Benjamin Holmes, David Lewis Macpherson, Jacob DeWitt, Edward Goff Penny, D. Lorn Macdougall and John Rose were also among the signatories to this document, which was comprehensively addressed "To the People of Canada." Its publication naturally produced much excitement and discussion. It soon became apparent that the sympathizers with the project were not confined to the 325 persons who had signed the manifesto. Among other public men who pronounced loudly in its favour was Mr. (L. J.) Papineau, who in so doing was consistent with the principles which he had professed ever since his return from exile; but it was a surprise to many persons to find the moderate, even-minded Mr. Alexander T. Galt among the advocates of annexation. Justices of the Peace, officers of the militia, Queen's Counsel, and others holding commissions at the pleasure of the Crown, were among the signers of the manifesto, which could not therefore be treated as a mere ebullition of feeling on the part of the democratic portion of the community alone. Similar manifestoes were issued at Toronto, Quebec and elsewhere, but the signatories were by no means so numerous as at Montreal; and indeed the feeling in favour of the movement cannot be said to have obtained much foothold anywhere else.* The agitation soon col-

* In Upper Canada some conspicuous Reformers showed, for a time, a decided leaning in favour of the movement, and would doubtless have come prominently forward in its favour had they been able to count upon support. Among these was Mr. Peter Perry, of Whitby. There can be no doubt that the personal influence of Mr. Baldwin, who regarded the idea of annexation with something like abhorrence, did much to counteract this tendency. Mr. Baldwin has sometimes been accused of being a strong party man, and such he undoubtedly was; but he was nevertheless one to whom some things were before party. He promptly notified Mr. Perry what his own sentiments were, and what he expected from his supporters. The text of his letter was published in the *Globe* of October 18th, 1849, as a rider to an editorial on the subject. The following extract from a hitherto unpublished letter, written by Mr. Baldwin on the 5th of October, 1849, to the late Mr. Lawrence Heyden, of Toronto, gives an excellent idea of the stand taken by him. It must be borne in mind that the agitation for annexation was then at its height, so far as it can be said to have reached any height at all:—

lapsed, for no considerable number of persons could be found to sanction the project. It would be most unjust, however, to denounce as "rebels" and "disloyal" (as has often been done) all those who lent their countenance to the annexation movement of 1849. Its supporters were for the most part honourable and well-meaning men who despaired of the future of the Province, and were sincerely desirous of improving its position as well as their own. Many of them were merchants who had been ruined or impoverished by the commercial depression which prevailed. Others, while they had not as yet sustained any great pecuniary loss, looked forward with

"I felt it right to write to Mr. Perry, expressing my decided opinions in respect of the annexation question, and that I could look upon those only who are in favour of the continuance of the connection with the mother country as political friends; those who are against it as political opponents. I felt this to be the more necessary because I had heard within a few days that one of our Parliamentary friends here was said to have given in, or to be about giving in, his adhesion to the annexation movement. The tactics of our opponents are transparent. They want to get some of our supporters of standing to commit themselves, and then turn round on them and the whole party, and impute the call for annexation to the Liberal party generally. I believe that our party are hostile to annexation. I am at all events hostile to it myself, and if I and my party differ upon it, it is necessary we should part company. It is not a question upon which a compromise is possible."

A short time before, the Hon. John Ross had written to the same correspondent as follows:—

"My own firm belief is that there is an organization among the Orangemen from one end of Canada to the other, with the intention and object of seizing upon the Government by force, and going for annexation. After overturning the Government they will sell out to the Yankees for a consideration. MacNab, Cayley and Boulton will get the lion's share of the spoils, and all will go on beautifully. They are so confoundedly reckless and unprincipled that they are prepared for anything. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose in the scramble, as Watts told them the other day in the House. My advice to all our friends is, *Prepare! Organize! Arm!* and put them down effectually when the struggle comes. If we are caught napping we shall repent it bitterly when too late. Besides, when they know that we are prepared, they will be the more likely to abstain from violence."

The two letters are eminently characteristic of the writers. In the first we see the calm, quiet firmness of high and inflexible principle. In the second we see the man of extreme views and narrow intelligence, hasty in judgment, rash in expression, and imprudent in counsel. The gentleman referred to as "Boulton" in the above extract was Mr. William H. Boulton, a strong Conservative, who represented Toronto in the Assembly. "Watts" was Mr. R. M. Watts, member for Drummond.

misgiving, and scented ruin or further depression in the not distant future. Some were republicans by predilection and on principle. A few were disappointed Tories who were disgusted at the Imperial Government for upholding the Rebellion Losses Bill, and whose disgust was so profound that they could find no sympathy in the ranks of the British American League. The rest were discontented radicals for whom the policy of the Government was not sufficiently advanced. Lord Elgin was not disposed to treat the promoters of the movement harshly, knowing that many of them had substantial grounds for discontent; but he deemed it necessary to cancel the commissions of such of them as held office at pleasure. Of course the Home Government sanctioned this step, and conveyed to his Excellency the Queen's command to resist to the utmost any attempt to effect a separation between Canada and the mother country, the connection between which, it was claimed, was highly advantageous to both.* By the time the despatch embodying this command reached Lord Elgin the movement was practically at an end, though its advocates did not actually relinquish their designs until some months afterwards.

In the beginning of November the removal of the departments from Montreal to Toronto took place. The respective offices were located in the long pile of buildings on Front street which had been used for Parliamentary purposes before the Union. The Governor himself, after a brief sojourn at a hotel, took up his abode at Elmsley Villa, a well-known structure of those days which stood on the site now occupied by the Central Presbyterian Church, on the corner of Grosvenor and St. Vincent streets.

Several ministerial changes occurred during the latter months of the year. Mr. (L. M.) Viger, being unable to approve of the removal of the seat of Government to Toronto, retired from

* See the despatch, dated 9th January, 1850. It was reprinted in Canada with a beautifully illuminated heading, and widely circulated throughout the Province.

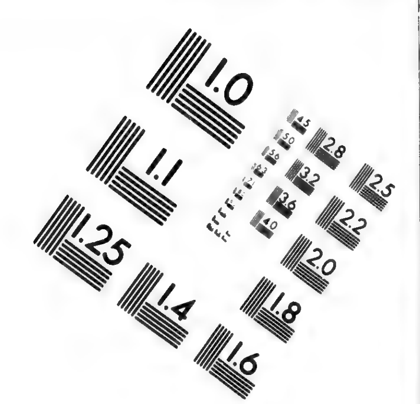
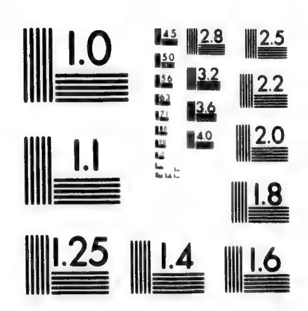
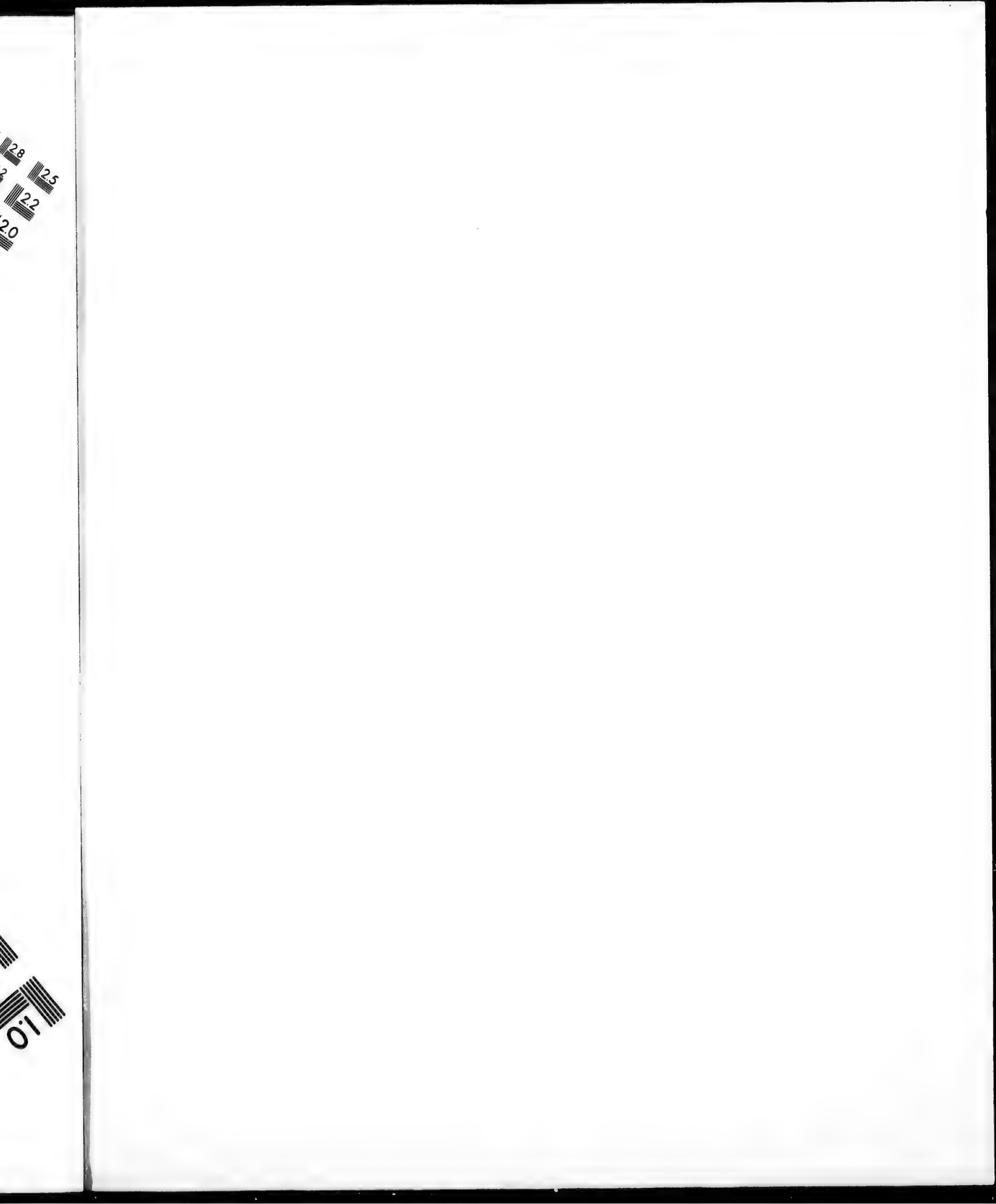


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the Cabinet on the 26th of November, and was succeeded in the Receiver-Generalship by Colonel Taché. This arrangement left vacant the office of Chief Commissioner of Public Works, which was filled on the 13th of December by the appointment of Mr. Chabot, one of the members for Quebec City. Mr. Caron retired from the Cabinet in November, but retained his place as Speaker of the Legislative Council. Mr. Malcolm Cameron, Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, also withdrew from the Government, owing to differences of opinion with his colleagues. The nature of these differences gave rise to much newspaper controversy at the time. Mr. Cameron asserted that his withdrawal was due to his not having been consulted by his colleagues on important public questions, and to his conviction that two Commissioners for the department of Public Works were unnecessary, and therefore a useless expense to the country. On the other hand, it was claimed that Mr. Cameron had been ambitious of ministerial advancement in a direction which his colleagues were unable to gratify, and that he had retired from mere spleen. The only thing certain about the matter is that Mr. Cameron resigned in December, though his resignation did not formally take effect until the appointment of his successor in the following year. Mr. Blake's retirement from the Solicitor-Generalship for Upper Canada—a non-ministerial office—has already been chronicled. He was succeeded by Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald, of Glengarry, who entered upon the duties of his office on the 14th of December.

Soon after the advent of the new year (1850) it became evident that other ministerial changes were desirable. Public opinion pointed to Mr. Merritt as the most competent man in the country to be entrusted with the department of Public Works, to which Mr. Chabot had just been appointed. At the end of March urgent private reasons compelled Mr. Chabot to resign, and a week later Mr. Merritt succeeded to the office. This left the Ministry with

only seven members; but on the 17th of April the Hon. Joseph Bourret, of Montreal, a French Canadian and a member of the Legislative Council, accepted the office of Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, which had been vacated by Mr. Cameron.* Mr. Bourret at the same time became President of the Council, which position Mr. Merritt had demitted upon his acceptance of the Chief Commissionership. The composition of the Ministry thenceforward remained unchanged until near the end of the year.

It was during this period that the combination known in our history as "the Clear Grit Departure" took its rise. Ever since the prorogation in 1849 there had been indications of dissatisfaction with the Government on the part of certain Upper Canadian Reformers. The Reform party was large, and composed of heterogeneous elements, some of which did not readily assimilate. "It cannot be expected," says Sir Francis Hincks,† "that there will be the same unanimity among the members of a party of progress as in one formed to resist organic changes. In the former there will always be a section dissatisfied with what they think the inertness of their leaders." The distinction here drawn is one which has long been a recognized fact in politics. The difficulty experienced by Reformers, as compared with their Conservative opponents, in the matter of efficient party organization, has become proverbial in Canada. It made itself clearly apparent before the close of the year 1849. The

* Mr. John Wetenhall, who represented the county of Halton in the Assembly, and who was President of the Provincial Agricultural Society, had been appointed to the Assistant Commissionership, as Mr. Cameron's successor, in the beginning of February. His acceptance of office vacated his seat in the Assembly, and he was compelled to enter upon what proved to be a vigorously-conducted election contest with Mr. Caleb Hopkins, of the township of Nelson. Early in the campaign Mr. Wetenhall's mental powers gave way under the pressure upon his nervous system, and it was found necessary to confine him in the Provincial Lunatic Asylum. Mr. Hopkins was elected, and Mr. Wetenhall's appointment of Assistant Commissioner of Public Works never took effect. The latter died in the Asylum under very painful circumstances a few months afterwards.

† "The Political History of Canada between 1840 and 1855;" p. 3

most radical element in the party complained that the Ministry did not move fast enough. This allegation was made upon various grounds, but the principal complaint was that Ministers were dilatory in pushing through the settlement of the Clergy Reserves. The origin and nature of this question will be disclosed in the next chapter. As the months passed by the discontented ones became more pronounced in their opposition to the Ministry, and by the beginning of the year 1850 had formed themselves into a distinct and separate party. They laid down a platform, enlisted the services of the press, and acquired a distinct party cognomen which has survived to the present day.

The platform embraced, among other radical changes: (1.) the application of the elective principle to all the officials and institutions of the country, from the head of the Government downwards; (2.) universal suffrage; (3.) vote by ballot; (4.) biennial Parliaments; (5.) the abolition of property qualification for Parliamentary representatives; (6.) a fixed term for the holding of general elections, and for the assembling of the Legislature; (7.) retrenchment in the expenses of carrying on the Administration; (8.) the abolition of pensions to judges; (9.) the abolition of the Courts of Common Pleas and Chancery, and the giving of an enlarged equitable jurisdiction to the Court of Queen's Bench; (10.) reduction of lawyers' fees; (11.) free trade and direct taxation; (12.) an amended jury law; (13.) the abolition or modification of the usury laws; (14.) the abolition of the doctrine of primogeniture, as applied to real estate; (15.) the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, and the abolition of the rectories. Many of these were already well-known planks in the platform of the Reform Party generally, and to some of them the Ministry were practically committed.* As regarded others, they

* "Reform of the suffrage, stringent retrenchment, reduction of law costs, further reform of the Judiciary, free trade, the opening up of the Clergy Reserves, the revocation of the 57 Rectory patents, if found to be fraudulent, the abolition of the law of primo-

were such as the Government could not approve. For instance, the proposed sweeping application of the elective principle and universal suffrage were among the reforms which, in the language of the chief ministerial organ, "embody the whole difference between a republican form of Government and the limited monarchy of Great Britain."* The chief newspaper organ of the new party, during this early period of their existence, was the Toronto *Examiner*, which had long been weary of following in the wake of the *Globe* as an exponent of ministerial views.

Chief among the advocates of the advanced platform were Messrs. Caleb Hopkins, Peter Perry, David Christie, James Lesslie, Dr. John Rolph, and William McDougall. With these Mr. Malcolm Cameron formally allied himself after his secession from the Administration.

Mr. Hopkins was a farmer, resident in the township of Nelson, in the county of Halton. He was a man of considerable energy and native sagacity, and posesssed much local influence. He had represented the East Riding of Halton in the First Parliament after the Union, and in March, 1850, he was again returned for the county against the ministerial candidate.† Peter Perry resided at Whitby, in what was then the East Riding of York—now the County of Ontario—where he had long been engaged in mercantile pursuits, and was known as an able man, of great enterprise and public spirit, albeit somewhat deficient in educational acquirements. He was one of the founders of the Reform Party of Upper Canada in 1824, and had ever since been recognized as one of the most efficient "fighting men" in its ranks. From 1824 to 1836 he represented the United Counties of Lennox and Addington

geniture, the abolition of the usury laws, and the reform of the jury system—are practical questions on which the Reform Party of Upper Canada are generally united, and which we have always contended for. . . There was no need to set up a new party for the agitation of these topics."—*Globe*, March 23rd, 1850.

* *Globe*, March 23rd, 1850. † *Ante*, p. 185, *note*.

in the Upper Canadian Assembly. Since the Union he had been to some extent overshadowed by Mr. Baldwin and others, and had remained out of Parliament, though he stood high in the confidence of his party, and carried considerable weight. He was extreme in his opinions, and demonstrative in expressing them, whereby he made for himself a good many enemies; but he was a most effective stump orator, and an important factor in local election campaigns. He had been a prominent supporter of Solicitor-General Blake, and had been largely instrumental in securing that gentleman's return to Parliament for the constituency in which Mr. Perry resided. Upon Mr. Blake's resignation of his seat, consequent upon his acceptance of the post of Chancellor, Mr. Perry was elected in his stead, and once more entered public life. David Christie was a farmer, resident in what is now the county of Brant, where he took an active part in politics, and was known as one of the leading agriculturists of the country. James Lesslie, who still resides in the neighbourhood of Toronto, was the proprietor of the *Examiner*, and had long been a leading advocate of Reform interests. Dr. Rolph has already been partially introduced to the reader.* He was unquestionably one of the ablest men who have figured in political and professional life in this country. He was of English birth, but came over to Canada in his youth, and settled in the county of Norfolk, whence he subsequently removed to Dundas, and thence, in 1832, to Little York. He attained high repute at the bar, as well as in the ranks of the Reform Party. For some years he sat in the old Upper Canadian Assembly, and did excellent service to the Reform cause, both in and out of Parliament. His famous speech on the subject of the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, delivered in the Assembly in 1836, was a notably brilliant specimen of argumentative oratory, and went

* *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 299, 313.

over the entire question of the connection between Church and State. After practising at the bar with great success for many years, he abandoned that pursuit, in consequence, it is said, of his dissatisfaction with certain decisions of the Chief Justice, the Hon. (afterwards Sir) John Beverley Robinson, and took up the medical profession,* in which he also attained a foremost place. His connection with the rebellion of 1837-'38, his escape to the United States, and his subsequent pardon and return to Canada, have all been referred to in former pages. After his return he resumed the practice of the medical profession in Toronto, where he founded one of the leading medical schools in the Province. He was a man of very remarkable subtlety and versatility of intellect. It is impossible to contemplate his long and chequered life without feeling respect for his great abilities; though, owing to certain unpleasant passages in his career, he failed to command the confidence of some leading members of the Reform Party. William McDougall, who at the present day still presents all the appearance of one enjoying a hearty and vigorous prime, was then a young man with a reputation still to be made. He is a native Canadian, born at York in 1822, so that he was still under thirty years of age at the period under consideration. He had studied law in Toronto, in the office of James Hervey Price, and had been admitted as an attorney and solicitor in 1847. Though he practised his profession, his time was chiefly taken up by journalistic pursuits. He was a contributor to the columns of *The Examiner*, and published an agricultural paper on his own account called *The Canada Farmer*. During the year 1850 he was largely instrumental in founding the *North American* newspaper at Toronto, of which he assumed the editorship, and which he conducted with much ability and vigour. It was founded as the

* In his youth, before leaving England, he had studied medicine under Sir Astley Cooper, and had also been called to the bar of the Inner Temple. He practised both law and medicine simultaneously during many years in Canada.

authorized exponent of Clear Grit principles, the *Examiner* not being sufficiently advanced in its radicalism to meet the views of some of the leaders of the new party. We shall meet Mr. McDougall many times in the subsequent course of the narrative. Such were the chief propounders of the Clear Grit * platform.

A similar movement was about the same time set on foot in the lower section of the Province, under the auspices of Mr. Papineau. It was organized at Montreal, under the title of "Le Partie Rouge." Its membership was chiefly confined to young French Canadians, though a few advanced radicals of British stock were also to be found in its ranks. Its platform seems to have been very elastic, and many of its adherents were disposed to go even farther than the Clear Grits in western Canada. They not only advocated such reforms as universal suffrage and the abolition of property qualification for members of the Legislature, but pronounced in favour of the repeal of the Union, a republican form of Government, and more or less speedy annexation to the United States. They also professed themselves hostile, not only to a State religion, but to any religion at all.† In short, the *Rouges* of Lower Canada seem to

* Various accounts of the origin of this not very dignified party designation have been given. The one which appears to be best authenticated refers it to a conversation between the late Mr. Brown and David Christie. These two gentlemen, it is said, were discussing the merits of the proposed "departure" early in the autumn of 1849. Mr. Brown declined to join the movement, and mentioned the name of a common friend of Mr. Christie and himself as also likely to hold aloof. "Him!" exclaimed Mr. Christie—"we don't want him! We want only men who are *clear grit.*" Soon afterwards the *Globe* began to refer to the members of the new party as "Clear Grits." We find them so designated by that journal several times during the month of December, 1849. They seem to have accepted the designation, for we soon after find them applying the term to themselves in the *Examiner* and elsewhere. In the *Globe* for January 10th, 1850, we find the following passage in an editorial on "The Clear Grits:"—"The *Globe* merely gave the name which they themselves had assumed to a little miserable clique of office-seeking, bunkum-talking cormorants who met in a certain lawyer's office in King St., and announced their intention to form a new party on 'clear Grit' principles." The "certain lawyer" was Mr. William McDougall.

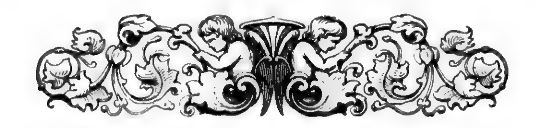
† "Le partie *rouge,*" says *La Minerve,* "s'est formé à Montreal sous les auspices de M. Papineau, en haine des institutions anglaises, de notre constitution déclarée viceuse, et

have been well-intentioned but rather feeble copies of their prototypes in the French Convention. Their chief organ was *L'Avenir*, and among the leading members, in addition to Mr. Papineau, were Antoine Aimé Dorion, J. B. E. Dorion, L. H. Holton and Charles J. Laberge.

As the time drew near for the meeting of the session of 1850, the discussion of the Clergy Reserves came even more conspicuously to the front than had ordinarily been the case of late years. The question was not to be finally set at rest for some sessions yet to come, but during the interval it was the most absorbing topic of public interest, and some knowledge of the subject is absolutely necessary to a proper understanding of the history of the time. Before carrying the narrative any farther, therefore, a brief historical retrospect is desirable.

surtout du gouvernement responsable regardé comme une duperie, avec des idées d'innovation en religion et en politique, accompagnées d'une haine profonde pour le clergé, et avec l'intention bien formelle et bien prononcée d'annexer le Canada aux Etats-Unis."





Chapter XXIX.

CLERGY RESERVES.

"Instead of making a State provision for any one or more churches: instead of apportioning the Clergy Reserves among them with a view to promoting Christianity: instead of giving pensions or salaries to ministers to make them independent of voluntary contributions from the people: I would studiously avoid that policy, and leave truth unfettered and unimpeded to make her own conquests. Lawyers and physicians have no Clergy Reserves. They depend upon the support of the community which benefits by their labours. The professions of law and physic are well represented in this Assembly, and bear ample testimony to the generosity of the people towards them. Will good, pious and evangelical ministers of our holy religion be likely to fare worse than the physicians of the body, or the agents for our temporal affairs? Let gospel ministers, as the Scriptures say, live by gospel, and the apostolic maxim that the workman is worthy of his hire implies the performance of duty rewarded temporarily by those who impose it. There is no fear that the profession will become extinct for want of professors."—Doctor John Rolph's *Speech on the Clergy Reserves in the Upper Canadian Assembly in 1836.*



HE Imperial Statute 31 Geo. III., chapter 31—generally known in our history as the Constitutional Act of 1791—contained certain enactments which were destined to produce a greater amount of animosity and heartburning in Upper Canada than all other public causes of discord combined. To the indefinite phraseology of those enactments must be referred the fiercest of the faction fights which periodically disturbed the peace of the Legislative Assembly for more than sixteen years before the Union. To them, and to the disputes arising out of them, is to be attributed the bitter hostility with which the Church of England was long regarded in Upper Canada by such of the religious population as did not subscribe to Episcopal doctrines. To them, more than to any other

cause whatever, the Upper Canadian rebellion owed its origin. Before the question to which these unfortunate enactments gave rise was finally set at rest, they had also produced some of the most fervid debates ever heard within the walls of the United Parliament. They formed the key-note of several general elections, and largely shaped the policy of two successive Administrations. In a word, out of these enactments grew the vexed question of the Clergy Reserves.

By the 36th section of the Act His Majesty was authorized to reserve out of future grants of land within the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, as well as in respect of all past grants, a quantity equal in value to a seventh part of the lands so granted, for the maintenance and support of "a Protestant Clergy." Sections 38 to 41 provided regulations for the erection and endowment of rectories, one or more in every township or parish, "according to the establishment of the Church of England;" and section 42 empowered the respective Legislatures of the two Provinces, subject to certain restrictions, to vary or repeal any of these enactments.

In Lower Canada no Reserves were set apart until the year 1796, and the Clergy Reserve question never assumed very formidable proportions there, except in so far as it was reflected, after the Union, as a purely party measure from the western section of the Province. Even in Upper Canada, which at the time of its creation as a separate Province was but sparsely populated, the ill effect did not make itself seriously felt until some years afterwards. In carrying out the provisions of the Act, instructions were given that the reserved lands should be intermixed with those granted to settlers; the intention being to spread them over a large area, and to create a tenantry in each individual township which should be settled, with a view to the ultimate creation of parishes. It was however impossible to apply this rule universally, as much of the Niagara peninsula, and also a part of the Western District, as well

as several townships along the St. Lawrence, had already been granted to U. E. Loyalists, without any portion thereof having been reserved. To meet these cases, large blocks of aggregated Reserves were set apart in adjoining townships which had not been taken up for purposes of settlement. It is obvious that such a system as this must sooner or later operate very prejudicially to the progress of the country where it is tolerated. It was felt as an obstruction to the settlement of the Province long before it assumed the shape of a grievance on religious grounds.* For many years no authority existed for selling the reserved lands. The Church of England claimed and exerted exclusive right and control over them, contending that the clergy of that Church, and they only, were entitled to be regarded as "a Protestant Clergy." A clerical corporation was established with power to grant leases for twenty-one years, and proceeded to create leasehold tenancies in favour of such approved persons as applied for them. The amount of rent charged was at first little more than nominal, but the free granting of lands by the Crown prevented much demand for leaseholds at any price. "So late as 1824," says a Canadian journalist, writing in 1851, "the whole amount due for rent was only £1,200; and of this it was estimated that not more than one-third could be collected without having recourse to legal process."† It was thus evident that the leasing system was not a success. The Reserves were unpopular with all but adherents of the Church of England, being regarded as obstructions to settlement, and as standing witnesses of the domination of a privileged hierarchy.

In 1817 a series of resolutions was introduced into the Assembly proposing a sale of half the lands reserved, and the application of the proceeds to secular purposes. These resolutions were unpro-

* "Religious Endowments in Canada. A Chapter of Canadian History," by Sir Francis Hincks, K.C.M.G., C.B. London, 1869; p. 3.

† See *North American*, September 5th, 1851.

ductive of any immediate result, owing to the summary and premature prorogation of Parliament by the Lieutenant-Governor; but they drew general attention to the fact that the Reserves were a serious abuse, and a drawback to the material progress of the country. Robert Gourlay also, during his ill-starred sojourn in Upper Canada, contributed by his literary and oratorical efforts to a public awakening on the subject. Meetings were held in various parts of the Province. Speeches directed against the arbitrary pretensions of the Church of England were made by zealous Presbyterians and Methodists. The Reserves found a strenuous champion in Dr. Strachan, Rector, and afterwards Archdeacon of York, but better known in later times as Bishop of Toronto. The Doctor, in addition to being a man of superabundant energy and fertility of resource, was the mouthpiece of the Family Compact, and the zealous upholder of the doctrines of the Church of England. His influence over the Executive was for years almost unbounded, and he was able to make the most of such technical arguments as his side of the case presented. Nor were those arguments without plausibility. The Clergy Reserves were an undoubted abuse, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that no strictly legal case could be made out for the exclusive claims set up in respect of them by the Church of England. That Church had, by implication, obtained at least partial State recognition at the hands of the framers of the Constitutional Act. The territory thereby authorized to be set apart was, as has been seen, declared to be for the support of "a Protestant Clergy." Although the Anglican Church had not been designated by name, there were grounds for arguing that that Church had been intended as the exclusive recipient of the State bounty. In those days, the word "clergy" was not ordinarily employed to designate any ministers of religion except those of the Church of Rome and those of the Church of England, and it had never been so employed in any Act of the British Parliament. The

Church of Rome was of course excluded by the term "Protestant;" so that, according to this strictly technical argument, the only remaining factor was the Church of England. Then, as has been seen, the Act contained clauses making provision for the establishment of parsonages and rectories which are peculiarly Church of England institutions. Within two years after the time when the Act came into operation, an Anglican Bishopric had been established in Canada. Governor Simcoe and his coadjutors in the founding of the Upper Province had all been zealous for the establishment of the Church of England there on a sure basis. Their zeal was doubtless due quite as much to political as to theological motives, but it was none the less an indication of the purpose which the Clergy Reserves had been intended to effect. We may be sure that Dr. Strachan made the most of such arguments as these, and that the Church of England in Upper Canada lost nothing in those days through the diffidence of her advocate.

On the other hand, supposing the foregoing argument to be unanswerable as matter of law, it was purely technical in its character, and did not go to the root of the matter. The Clergy Reserves, by the extent to which they retarded settlement, were already beginning to make themselves felt as a national curse. If the law was in favour of their retention, it was clearly a bad law, and should be speedily repealed. Such was the plea put forward by "dissenters," as they were called, and even by a few liberal-minded lay Episcopalians. But dissenters were not disposed to grant the exclusive claims of the ministry of the Church of England to be regarded as the only "Protestant Clergy." That term, they argued, had been employed by the framers of the Constitutional Act in contradistinction to the clergy of the Church of Rome, and not as intended to exclusively indicate the clergy of the Church of England. Moreover, the term "Incumbents or Ministers of the Church of England" had been used in the Act, and it was contended that

such a phrase would not have been employed if it had been regarded as synonymous with the expression "Protestant Clergy." The clauses providing for the establishment of parsonages and rectories, it was argued, referred merely to matters of detail, and could not be allowed to override the larger intention of the Act, which was to make provision for a *Protestant*—as distinguished from a *Roman Catholic*—Clergy. The Presbyterians had a distinct argument of their own. By the Act of Union of the two kingdoms of England and Scotland it was made a fundamental article that "the true Protestant religion" as then professed in Scotland, "with the worship, discipline, and government" of that Church, should be effectually and unalterably secured within the kingdom of Scotland. The Church of Scotland having thus been recognized by the State as a Protestant Church, surely the ministers thereof were entitled to be regarded as a "Protestant Clergy." Several British statutes passed subsequent to the Constitutional Act of 1791 expressly referred to them as "Clergy."* This contention was fully sustained in 1819 by the English law officers of the Crown, to whom the question was then referred by the Imperial Government in consequence of a despatch from Sir Peregrine Maitland. "We are of opinion," wrote those eminent jurists, "that though the provisions made by 31st Geo. III., c. 31, ss. 36–42, for the support and maintenance of a Protestant Clergy, are not confined solely to the Clergy of the Church of England, but may be extended also to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland, if there are any such settled in Canada (as appears to have been admitted in the debate upon the passing of the Act); yet that they do not extend to Dissenting Ministers, since we think the term Protestant Clergy can apply only to Protestant Clergy recognized and established by law."

Meanwhile the Reserves were every year becoming more and

* See, for instance, 48 Geo. III., c. 138; 50 Geo. III., c. 84; and 5 Geo. IV., c. 72.

more valuable, and had begun to yield a considerable revenue. The right of the Church of Scotland to participate in this revenue having been recognized by the law officers of the Crown, its adherents soon afterwards began to press their claims. Mr. William Morris, whom we have met in more recent times as a member of Lord Metcalfe's Government, moved and carried a series of resolutions on the subject in the Upper Canadian Assembly. Upon these an Address to the King was founded, praying that His Majesty would direct such measures as would secure to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland such support as might be thought proper. The Church of England, through Dr. Strachan, put forth its weightiest efforts to oppose the Presbyterian claims, and to substantiate its own alleged right to exclusive control of the Reserves. The Doctor soon afterwards repaired to England, backed by the influence of Sir Peregrine Maitland, to urge the Episcopalian side of the argument at the Home Office. His efforts were for the time unproductive, as to the main purpose to which they were directed, though there can be no doubt that he gained many advocates for his views. Time fails us to follow the history of the question in detail down to the time of the Union. The ministers of other Protestant denominations put forward claims on behalf of their respective sects to participate in the Reserves, upon the ground that they, no less than their Episcopalian and Presbyterian brethren, were entitled to be regarded as "Protestant Clergy." It soon became apparent that no equitable apportionment would ever be effected, even if the Legislature could be induced to assent to such a project. There were many persons also who disapproved of State aid to religious bodies; and erelong an agitation arose for the total abolition of such aid. An organized Reform Party came into existence, and battled vigorously for the secularization of the Reserves—that is to say, for the diverting of them from religious purposes by a sale of the lands, and the application of the proceeds to education and municipal improvements.

Every session of the Assembly was marked by hot debates on the subject. The advocates of secularization repeatedly carried their point in the Lower House, but were checkmated by the refusal of the Legislative Council to concur. The Council was appointed by the Executive, and for many years the Executive was the mere tool of Dr. Strachan. Thus it was that the clause in the Constitutional Act authorizing the Provincial Legislature to "vary or repeal" its provisions was a dead letter. And it may here be remarked that this was the conjunction of circumstances that first gave rise to the agitation for Responsible Government in Upper Canada.

In January, 1836, Sir John Colborne, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, gave way for Sir Francis Bond Head. A few days before his departure, and while his successor was actually on the way from New York to Toronto, Sir John, at the instigation of the Executive Council, created and endowed forty-four* rectories in Upper Canada They were endowed with more than 17,000 acres of land, giving an average of about 386 acres to each. They were put in possession of clergymen, who thus acquired a quasi-personal interest in the lands, which interest, it was believed, would prevent the latter from being ousted by course of law. When this proceeding became known the public indignation was tremendous. Such a complete disregard of the popular wishes on the part of the Executive was intolerable. Meetings were held at which the action of his Excellency was denounced, and the newspapers spoke out with a plainness not to be mistaken. Petitions were sent across the Atlantic praying that the act of Her Majesty's representative might be annulled.† The legality of the transaction was disputed, and the law officers of the

* Not fifty-seven, as stated in the histories. Thirteen of the patents were left unsigned by the Lieutenant-Governor, and the authorities refused to complete or recognize them.

† "The temper of the public mind became imbued with that sullenness which a sense of injury begets, and which forebodes the approach of civil commotion."—*North American*, October 24th, 1851.

Crown, to whom the question was referred, pronounced on the facts before them that the creation and endowment were not "valid and lawful acts." This opinion having been communicated to Dr. Strachan, that reverend gentleman prepared an elaborate report, embodying various facts and documents which had not previously been submitted to the law officers. The latter accordingly considered the case in the new aspect thus presented, and arrived at the conclusion that the creation and endowment were legal. The arrangement, therefore, was not disturbed.

The rebellion of 1837-'38 came and went, leaving the great Clergy Reserve problem yet unsolved. Scarcely were the embers of disaffection extinguished ere the agitation for secularization burst forth afresh. The Union project caused a lull in the storm. Upon the arrival in Upper Canada of Mr. Thomson—afterwards Lord Sydenham—that gentleman perceived the utility of settling the question before the Union Act should take effect. At his instigation an Act was passed by the local Assembly providing for a distribution of the Reserves among the various religious denominations recognized by law. Through the personal influence of the Governor-General the assent of the Legislative Council to the measure was also procured. It was however an unpopular measure with all classes, and recognized a principle against which a great majority of the people's representatives in the Assembly had for years contended; namely, that State property may justly be appropriated for religious purposes. Of this the Governor was well aware, but he was desirous of settling the question in some way, and this was the most equitable to which he could then obtain assent. No man of less energy and finesse could have succeeded in getting such a measure through either House of Parliament. When its provisions became known, petitions against it began to circulate throughout the Province. They however proved to be unnecessary. The English judges, on certain technical grounds not necessary to be here specified, pro-

nounced the Act to be *ultra vires*, and it was accordingly disallowed.* But the necessity for promptly dealing with the matter was recognized by the Home Government, and an Imperial Act was framed and passed during the session of 1840 (3 and 4 Vic., c. 78), authorizing the Governor, with the advice of his Council, to sell and distribute the Reserves. It was enacted that no further reservations should be made, and that the proceeds of previous sales should be distributed between the Churches of England and Scotland, to the exclusion of all other denominations, in the proportions of two-thirds and one-third respectively. All future proceeds were to be divided as follows: one-third to the Church of England, one-sixth to the Church of Scotland; and the residue to be applied by the Governor, with the advice of his Council, "for purposes of public worship and religious instruction in Canada." The meaning of the latter provision was that the residue should be apportioned among such dissenting denominations as chose to apply for a share of it.

For several years subsequent to the Union this arrangement was allowed to rest undisturbed. It was inevitable, however, that the agitation should be renewed sooner or later, for the distribution as settled by the Act was inequitable, and founded on an erroneous construction of the census. The spiritual peers in the Upper House, moreover, were doubtless in a great measure responsible for the framework of the Act, and it was hardly to be expected that those reverend prelates would be able to approach the consideration of such a subject with a perfectly unbiassed mind. The very principle of the grant was unpalatable to certain denominations, which declined to avail themselves of it. The Disruption in the Scottish Church in 1843 was reflected in Canada soon afterwards, and doubtless precipitated the revival of the Clergy Reserves agitation. In 1844 many Reformers in Upper Canada contended that secularization should be made a plank in their party platform. Thenceforward down to the

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 66.

period at which the narrative has arrived the agitation gained strength. The Church of England, which already enjoyed the lion's share of the State grant, bestirred itself to gain further advantages. During Mr. Sherwood's tenure of office as Solicitor-General he proposed an address to the Crown praying for a new Imperial Act authorizing a division of the land itself, instead of the income arising therefrom. The object was to enable the Church Societies to lease the lands, or to hold them at prices which would practically exclude them from the market. The motion was rejected by a majority of 37 to 14. The debate upon it plainly proved that some of the leaders of the Reform party were opposed to any reopening of the matter. Mr. Baldwin expressed his regret that it had been thought necessary to bring the question again before Parliament. He regretted it, he said, on account of the Church whose name was associated with it, and of which he was an humble member; he regretted it on account of the Province at large, but more especially that part of it which had suffered from former agitation, and which, because of its more direct connection with the subject, was more susceptible of injurious excitement. He concluded a rather long speech by requesting both sides of the House to forbear reviving the question, adding that he had done all in his power to discourage its revival by those with whom he was accustomed to act. Mr. James Hervey Price, who was a Congregationalist, followed in the same strain. He stigmatized the Clergy Reserves as the chief cause of the rebellion, and as "one of the greatest curses that could have been inflicted on the land." He added, however, that the settlement under Lord Sydenham had been considered as final. Peace had succeeded the long and fierce conflict, and the country was settling down in the hope that agitation on the subject was at an end. Although three-fourths of the people believed that the arrangement had been made in injustice and partiality, they quietly submitted as the only means of restoring peace to the land. It is a significant

fact that notwithstanding these remarks, Mr. Price was the man who some years afterwards moved the address in the Assembly for the repeal of the Imperial Act, with a view to the secularization of the Reserves by the Canadian Legislature.

No sooner had a Reform Government succeeded to power, in 1848, than it became evident that a large majority of the Upper Canadian people were thoroughly aroused on the subject. A cry rose up from end to end of the Province that the project of secularization had been long enough delayed, and the Ministry were importuned to lose no time in carrying it out. A matter very frequently lost sight of, however, both then and subsequently, by persons unfamiliar with the constitution, was that before any useful legislation could be set on foot by the Canadian Parliament the repeal of the Imperial Act of 1840 must be procured. The new Administration, as we have seen, was formed while the session of 1848 was in progress. That session came to an end a few days afterwards, and the remainder of the year was spent by the Government in preparing urgent legislation for the session of 1849. The latter was one of the busiest sessions known to our Parliamentary history, and was also, for reasons well known to the reader, one of the most disturbed. But the agitators generally looked for some official expression of opinion from the Government on the subject, and were not a little chagrined when the year 1849 passed away without any such expression having been uttered. A moody, discontented feeling began to take possession of the more advanced radicals, and the Clear Grits, as has been seen, formed themselves into a distinct third party, with secularization as one of their main purposes. When the Houses met in 1850 it became known that no steps had been taken to procure the repeal of the Imperial Act.

Such was the aspect of affairs at the opening of the session of 1850. And the end was not yet. Four more sessions were to elapse ere the irritating Clergy Reserves question was to become a thing of the past.

The quantity of Reserves in the Lower section of the Province was small as compared with those in the Upper, and, as has been seen, the question never became one of paramount importance there. But Lower Canada had a grievance of her own which had begun to make itself listinctly felt long before the Union, and had ever since been constantly thrusting itself upon public attention. This was the Seigniorial Tenure the nature of which has been to some extent indicated on a former page.* It dated back to the early days of the colony, when the aristocracy of New France—having obtained from the most Christian king, or his intermediaries, patents of large tracts of the colonial domain—imported the feudal system into the New World, by constituting themselves seigniors, and granting out small holdings to soldiers and others who settled in the colony. These holdings were not granted in fee simple: a tenure unknown in Canada until after the Conquest: and the title conferred was in no sense absolute. A perpetual right of occupancy was however guaranteed by the seignior, subject to the performance by the occupant (called the censitaire) of certain specified services, and the periodical payment of a specified rent. The tenancy, such as it was, descended to the heir of the occupant, who stood in the same relation to the seignior or his heir as his ancestor had done. The amount of rent was at first little more than nominal, but the duties to be performed were sometimes onerous, and sometimes even absurd. The censitaire possessed the right of disposing of his holding, but upon every transfer the seignior was entitled to exact a fine equal in amount to one-twelfth of the price. Milling and other vexatious monopolies were exercised by the seignior, and prevented the development of industry.† In some cases the seignior also claimed cer-

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 53.

† "To grind his grain at the seignior's mill, bake his bread in the seignior's oven, work for him one or more days in the year, and give him one fish in every eleven, for the privilege of fishing in the river before his farm; these were the most annoying of the conditions to which the censitaire was liable."—"The Old Régime in Canada," by Francis Parkman, pp. 250, 251.

tain arbitrary privileges of a harassing nature, the exaction whereof led to great discontent and ill-feeling. A seigniory was frequently the subject of bargain and sale, and the purchaser was sometimes a person of humble origin, whose social ascendency was tolerated by the censitaires with ill-concealed aversion.* Under such a state of things the French Canadians grew up from generation to generation; but as time passed by the condition of the country improved, and the seigniorial claims proportionately increased in value. After the Conquest, many of the seigniors, driven by their own necessities, began to make encroachments upon the rights of the censitaires, and to levy exactions which were clearly illegal. Rents were raised, and monopolies were enforced with a rigorous hand. The want of education and practical knowledge on the part of the unlettered *habitant* enabled his feudal lord to overstep the law with comparative impunity, and with such facilities for wrong-doing it was inevitable that gross abuses of power should occasionally come to light. Long before the period at which the narrative has arrived this Seigniorial Tenure had begun to be felt as at once a grievous burden upon the censitaire and an obstruction to the country's progress. This was more especially the case in cities and towns, where the objectionable features of the system naturally made themselves more conspicuous than in the rural districts. In the District of Montreal, where the rents were higher than in Quebec, the grievance was especially obnoxious. The "commonalty" by degrees awoke to the fact that they were living in a state of serfdom from which it was desirable that they should emancipate themselves. Such a relic of feudal times as the Seigniorial Tenure was totally unsuited to the condition of a progressive country, and the clamour for its abolition increased

* "A trader or a thrifty *habitant* might, and often did, become the buyer. If the Canadian noble was always a seignior, it is far from being true that the Canadian seignior was always a noble."—"The Old Régime in Canada," p. 254.

year by year. It found few defenders, even among the seigniors themselves. The chief difference of opinion arose as to the question of commutation. The more advanced radicals advocated the total and immediate sweeping away of the entire system, without making any recompense to the seigniors. Persons of more moderate opinions admitted the right to compensation which the seigniors had acquired by prescription, and advocated a joint commutation of the *cens et rentes* by the State and the censitaires. An Act passed in 1849 afforded certain facilities for an *optional* commutation, but its provisions afforded little or no practical relief to the censitaires, who refused to accept the measure as an adequate remedy for the evils to which they were subjected.

Such were the most prominent features of the great question of the Seigniorial Tenure, which, jointly with that of the Clergy Reserves, was to engross a considerable share of the debates during every session for several years to come.





Chapter XXX.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS SECULARIZATION.

"The great discordance of opinion on the subject [of the Clergy Reserves] expressed by the different Cabinet Ministers explained the mystery that had hung over the action of the Government."—*North American*, November 20th, 1851.



HE session of 1850 was opened by the Governor at Toronto on Tuesday, the 14th of May. The place of meeting was in the old Parliament Buildings on Front Street already mentioned; being the identical structures now used for Parliamentary purposes by the local Legislature of Ontario. Considerable expense had been incurred in renovating, refitting, and decorating the chambers respectively assigned to the two Houses, both of which presented a most tasteful appearance. The weather was delightful, and the streets were crowded with strangers who had arrived in the city to witness the opening ceremonies. It was remarked by the local press that art had combined with nature to celebrate in a fitting manner the reëstablishment of a Parliament in the old capital of Upper Canada.

The Speech from the Throne referred to the important changes which had recently been made in the Imperial Navigation laws, and expressed a belief that those changes, and the improvements in the Provincial canals, would materially tend to promote the commercial interests of the Province. Gratification was expressed at the improved position of Canadian securities in the British market; and it was announced that an Act passed during the last session of the Imperial Parliament had conferred upon the Provincial authorities

entire control over the internal postal arrangements in British North America. The importance of establishing free trade between the various British North American colonies was referred to, as was also the project of reciprocity with the United States. A few of the proposed measures of the session were briefly touched upon, but there was no allusion to the question of the Clergy Reserves—an omission which caused no little dissatisfaction among the advocates of secularization.* The Speech, as a whole, was practical in its tone, and indulged in fewer vague generalities than are commonly to be met with in such compositions.

The debate on the Address in Reply occupied about a week in the Assembly,† and was marked by exceptional virulence on the part of the Opposition, which consisted of three separate parties, having no sentiment in common except hostility to the Government. First in importance came the Conservative party, numbering about fifteen members, with Sir Allan MacNab, John A. Macdonald, Henry Sherwood and William Cayley at their head. Next came the Clear Grit representatives, five or six in number, including Malcolm Cameron, Peter Perry and Caleb Hopkins. Then there were Mr. Papineau and the *Rouges*. In addition to these three parties there were four or five members who, like Colonel Prince and Henry John Boulton,‡ called themselves

* "We cannot conclude this notice without referring to the absence of the Clergy Reserve question from a place in the Speech. We need not say how much we regret that it is not to be a Ministerial question; but we are free to state our conviction that if a difference of opinion does exist in the Cabinet on this subject, the Reform party of Upper Canada would not have justified those members who feel strongly with them upon it in retiring from office at this moment. Mr. Price has already announced his intention of bringing up the subjects of the Clergy Reserve and Rectories as open questions, and we trust and sincerely believe both will be satisfactorily settled during the session."—*Globe*, Thursday, May 16th, 1850.

†The Address passed almost without discussion in the Legislative Council, where a single vote—that of the Hon. Thomas McKay—was recorded against it.

‡Mr. Boulton had been returned by a Reform constituency (Norfolk) as a supporter of the Government, and had been recognized as such until a short time before the opening

Independents, and who sometimes voted with, and sometimes against, the Government. Among the earliest of the numerous amendments proposed to the Address were two series moved respectively by the two gentlemen last named. Those of Mr. Boulton sought, among other objects, to obtain a declaration by the House in favour of retrenchment in the public expenditure; of the application of the elective principle to members of the Legislative Council; and of such a readjustment of the Parliamentary representation as should give to each section of the Province a membership proportionate to the population. Colonel Prince's amendments were directed to the abolition of the Court of Chancery, and to a condemnation of the Executive for dismissing from office various signers of the annexation manifesto.* All these amendments, together with many others, were voted down by varying majorities, and the Address as a whole was finally carried on Monday, the 27th, by a majority of 44 to 14. Mr. Papineau continued to avail himself of every opportunity of embarrassing the Government, and displayed a rancour which widened the breach that he had already created between himself and the more moderate of his compatriots. Sir Allan MacNab also exceeded his wont in the acri-

of the session. His now appearing in the ranks of the Opposition was partly due to the Government's having refused to appoint him to a vacant judgeship. He was entitled to some consideration at the hands of the Ministry by reason of his services in the cause of Responsible Government, and he would doubtless have made an efficient judge; but there were episodes in his past career which had not tended to make him respected or popular, and so much influence was brought to bear against him that his claims were passed over, and the vacant position was filled by the appointment of Mr. Robert Easton Burns.

* Before moving these amendments, Colonel Prince had presented a petition signed by "numerous respectable Canadians," praying the House to address Her Majesty with a request that Canada might be relieved from her dependent state, and allowed to become "an independent sovereignty." Mr. Baldwin regarded the petition as quasi-treasonable, and moved that it should not be received. The Colonel defended its reception with great volubility, but Mr. Baldwin's motion was carried, in a House of 64, by 57 votes to 7. The minority consisted of Colonel Prince himself, Malcolm Cameron, L. J. Papineau, Benjamin Holmes, Jacob De Witt (Beauharnois), John McConnell (Stanstead), and J. S. Sanborn (Sherbrooke County).

moniousness of his opposition throughout the session. He revived the subject of rebellion losses, and alleged that the measure of the preceding session had been the direct cause of the annexation movement. Some of his public references to Mr. Lafontaine's alleged connection with the troubles of 1837-'38 were positively gross in their rude personality. His course during the entire session was simply splenetic and ill-tempered, insomuch that he alienated the support of some of his old colleagues. Colonel Gugy, who had always up to this time ranged himself among the ultra-Conservatives, now appeared in the *rôle* of a supporter of the Ministry. His secession from the Conservative ranks was announced for the first time during the debate on one of Mr. Boulton's amendments to the Address. In the course of that debate Sir Allan struck right and left in his rancorous denunciations of Ministers and their policy, and even went so far as to refer to the Governor-General as having "shut himself up in his own particular cell at Monklands for three months, instead of riding into town every day and doing his duty." After a few pacificatory remarks from Mr. Merritt, who commented upon the impropriety of dragging his Excellency's name into the discussion, Colonel Gugy arose and formally announced that he could no longer support the policy of the gallant Knight from Hamilton. That honourable gentleman, he said, occupied a high position, in which he had the power of doing much good to his country, and of advancing its highest interests; but in his place that night he had not shown a proper sense of his position. He had only displayed an anxiety to wound, to lacerate the feelings of those opposed to him. The honourable member, perhaps, had not so intended, but there was little doubt that it would go abroad that he approved of the scenes of violence which had passed before their eyes last year, of which no Christian man, no man of good feeling could help disapproving. He (Colonel Gugy) declared that he was forced to create this breach with his friends, and that the act gave him

the greatest pain. He could not expect any sympathy from members on the other side of the House, from whom he differed on many subjects, and who knew nothing beforehand of the step he was then taking. His intended course was well known to his friends on his own side of the House, however; the matter had been discussed in private, and he had made no secret of his views. He would put the question on the broadest possible ground: on that debate depended the continuance in office of the Administration. He had had no communication with the Ministry, but he felt that he was bound by his duty to his country not to do anything to endanger their tenure of office. He wanted peace, and was averse to scenes of violence; and he felt that the natural effect of the course of the gallant Knight was anarchy and confusion. There was already a great relaxation of social bonds in the country; the standard of political morals was already too low, and the first duty of the Legislature was to raise it. He (Colonel Gugy) had all his life acted with the minority, and he expected still to continue to do so; but he was prepared to bow to the decision of the majority. Every one knew that he was not pleased with the events which had preceded those scenes of violence which the gallant Knight had alluded to with questionable taste; he was grieved by them, but he bowed to the popular sentiment. He might be willing to see the dismissal of the Ministry, but he could see no chance of such a result from the course of the honourable member. If, by a coalition between members who were monarchically inclined and those who were prepared to connect the Province with the neighbouring republic, they could turn out that Ministry, what would they substitute for them? Could they form an Administration to take their places which would last an hour? Could they sit at the same board and not eat each other up? Perhaps the honourable member hoped that he would eat up the other members as Aaron's rod swallowed all the rest. If they could bring about such a result, ought they to do so? He (Colonel Gugy) thought

that it was their duty to abstain from all attacks on the Administration in regard to their treatment of the annexation question. One who had fought the battles of his country like the honourable and gallant Knight should have rather manifested a desire to support the constitution and those who upheld it.

In this speech of Colonel Gugy may be discerned the first public indication of the movement which resulted, several years later, in the reorganization of the Tory party, and in the formation of the party which has ever since been known as Liberal-Conservative.*

The project of increasing the representation was again introduced by Mr. Lafontaine, but was unsuccessful for the same reason as during the session of 1849; viz., the impossibility of obtaining a two-thirds vote in its favour. It was now defeated by a majority of five; the vote upon it standing 51 to 21, and the two-thirds majority requiring a vote in its favour of at least 56. The reference which had been made in the opening Speech to the establishment of free-trade between the various British North American colonies was acted upon by the passing of a measure authorizing the Governor in Council from time to time to declare that any article grown, produced or manufactured in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland, might be admitted into the Province free of duty.

A characteristic feature of the debates was the frequent expression of a desire for retrenchment in the public service. The agitation on this subject had originated with the Clear Grits, but, being a popular political cry, it was taken up with more or less avidity by all the opponents of the Government, and even, in a quiet way, by some of their supporters. In spite of all opposition, however, the Govern-

* The Colonel himself probably had no idea of any such result at that time, nor had he any direct influence in bringing it about; but his speech seems to have stimulated some Tory politicians to greater activity and independence of thought; and it is certain that his remarks were quoted at party caucuses more than three years afterwards, when arrangements for reorganization were on foot.

ment carried all their cherished measures by considerable majorities, and got through with a good deal of practical legislation.

Among the most important of the questions which engrossed the attention of Parliament during the session was that of the Clergy Reserves. On the 18th of June, Mr. Price, Commissioner of Crown Lands, introduced a series of resolutions, with the object of procuring the repeal of the Imperial Act of 1840, and of enabling the Canadian Legislature to dispose of the reserved lands, subject to the condition of securing to the existing holders for their lives the stipends to which they were entitled. These resolutions were not introduced officially, but on the sole responsibility of Mr. Price himself. The Ministry were not unanimous in their views on the question, and hence it had been found impossible to introduce a ministerial measure. The French Canadian members were much averse to committing themselves on the Clergy Reserves and Rectory questions. Mr. Lafontaine, after careful consideration, was unwilling to be instrumental in diverting the Reserves to secular purposes. Colonel Taché and Mr. Viger were of a similar mind. Many Upper Canadian members who were not in the confidence of Ministers were disposed to be exceedingly suspicious of the ministerial tactics on this question. The Clear Grits repeatedly endeavoured to induce the Government to commit themselves to some specific line of action, but in vain. Ministers were taunted, through the press, and on the floor of the House, with a desire to shirk this great question of religious liberty and equality. During the discussion on the resolutions a dispute arose as to the best method of procedure. The general voice of the Assembly was in favour of procuring the repeal of the Imperial Act, as contemplated by the resolutions, before attempting to deal with the Reserves. The Clear Grits and a few other malcontents advocated the immediate passing, by the Provincial Legislature, of a Bill dealing with the question, which Bill could afterwards be sent home to receive the royal assent. Such

a proceeding, it was argued, would be a very clear indication of the wishes of the Canadian people, and the Imperial authorities, who had testified their approval of the doctrines of Responsible Government as applied to the colonies, would then not hesitate to repeal the Act of 1840.

The differences of opinion between Ministers came out very clearly in the course of the discussion. Mr. Baldwin combated the idea that vested rights could justly be set aside by the mere will of a majority. That, he said, was a false principle, whether in politics or in morals. There must be such a thing as right and justice, whether opposed to the will of a majority or not. Nor did he admit that the Clergy Reserve lands were the property of the people in the sense in which they were sometimes said to be. They had been set apart for a particular purpose, and there must be something more than the mere will of a majority to justify the interference of Parliament. Otherwise, he added, no man's property would be safe. The agitation on this question had been got up partly by persons having conscientious scruples against all religious endowments. For his part, he had no such scruples. He did not think endowments for religious purposes at all objectionable, but he did object to the union of the Church with the State. Up to the passing of the Act of 1840 he had been of opinion that the revenues should be devoted to education; but he felt that that Act had altered the position of affairs, and he did not feel so decided as to the mode in which the property should be disposed of. He was not prepared to go into the question; but he did not regard the Imperial Act as a final settlement, because it did not express the opinion of the Canadian people.

Mr. Lafontaine said that he was not one of those who considered an Act of Parliament as a final settlement, but there was a great difference between considering a thing not final, and repealing every Act which embodied the rights of private individuals. In

his opinion the granting of the Reserves had been a very injudicious exercise of power, but it had been effected by those who undoubtedly *had* the power, and if any individual rights had been obtained under that Act they should not be disturbed. He considered that the endowments should be held inviolate, and, as far as possible, carried into effect. The honourable gentleman showed on how different a foundation the religious endowments of Lower Canada rested, nine-tenths of which had been donations from private individuals, and not from the Crown.

Mr. Drummond took a stand directly opposed to that of Mr. Lafontaine. In the case of the Clergy Reserve lands, he said, there was no donee, and he regarded the endowment as incomplete. He denied that any vested right had arisen under the endowments. But even if there were such rights, was it not the first duty of Parliament to preserve the peace of society? Did there not arise in all communities occasions in which the interests of society required that vested rights should be disturbed? Who would say that France was in the wrong when she manumitted all the serfs in the country in a single night? Yet that was an interference with a vested right. Was it wrong in England to free the blacks in the West Indies? Was it wrong in the British Parliament to take from the bishops in Ireland a small portion of their large income? Was it wrong in Lord Morpeth to propose to take an annual sum from the Irish Church and devote it to educational purposes, when in many of the benefices there were but few persons professing the religion of the Church of England, and in others none? In the debates in the English Parliament on that proposal he did not find that any one had objected to it on the ground that it interfered with a vested right.

Mr. Hincks admitted the existence of wide differences of opinion in the Cabinet on the Clergy Reserves question, but he declared that it was an utter misrepresentation to charge members with

endeavouring to evade dealing with it. The Ministry were charged with being renegades and traitors because they did not choose to adopt the absurd and unconstitutional measure suggested by honourable members who were willing to treat the question only by the introduction of a Bill. Those parties were striving to delude the Reform party when they declared that theirs was the only proper mode by which to bring about a satisfactory settlement.

The constitutional right of the Canadian Legislature to pass a Bill dealing with the question gave rise to much subtlety of argument both in and out of Parliament. The Assembly solved the problem by passing Mr. Price's resolutions, and in due course an Address, founded upon them, was passed by a majority of forty-six to twenty-three, and sent over to England by Lord Elgin. His Excellency, in the despatch which accompanied the Address, expressed his regret at the revival of the agitation on the Clergy Reserves question. This sentiment was reëchoed in the reply of the Colonial Secretary, who, however, admitted that the question was one "so exclusively affecting the people of Canada that its decision ought not to be withdrawn from the Provincial Legislature."* It was, however, too late for the Imperial Government to give effect to the Address during the current year. They concluded to introduce the necessary legislation during the session of 1851. Why they failed to carry out this intention will hereafter appear. The Canadian Legislature, by passing the Address, were for the time estopped from proceeding any farther with the matter.

The question of the abolition of the Seigniorial Tenure came up for discussion in both Houses during the session, and prolonged but fruitless debates upon it took place. No definite plan of commutation having been formed, the matter was left over to be dealt with in the future. The Provincial Parliament having, as already intimated, been invested with the control of the internal post office, a

* See Earl Grey's despatch of January 27th, 1851.

Postal Bill was passed, making provision for the appointment of a Provincial Postmaster-General, and establishing cheap and uniform rates of postage. An amended Election Law, a Road Act, and a Banking Act were also placed on the statute-book. Among the other chief measures of the session were numerous Acts relating specially to Upper Canada. One of these was an Act extending the jurisdiction of Division Courts to £25, and establishing an improved system of procedure, together with an equitable scale of fees. Another extended the jurisdiction of County Courts. Another provided for the better administration of justice in the Court of Chancery. Still another provided for the better establishment and maintenance of Common Schools, and made provision for the establishment of separate schools for the children of Roman Catholics. An elaborate Jury law, an amended Municipal law, a law establishing a more equal system of assessment, and an extended Joint Stock Companies' Act may also be enumerated among the practical measures relating to the western section of the Province.

Parliament was prorogued by his Excellency on the 10th of August. Some idea of the amount of business transacted during the session may be derived from the following facts. No fewer than 247 Bills were introduced into the two Houses—228 in the Assembly, and nineteen in the Upper House. Ninety-nine Bills were lost or dropped in the Assembly, and three in the Council; and 145 received the royal assent. Not one Bill passed during the session was vetoed or reserved by the Governor—"a fact," remarked the chief ministerial organ, "unprecedented, we believe, in our political history, and showing the practical existence of Responsible Government." * In addition to the strictly legislative business, 739 petitions were presented to the Assembly, and eighty-four select committees were appointed, of which thirteen made no report, and the

* *Globe*, Tuesday, August 13th, 1850.

remaining seventy-one made 106 reports. So that the Government were able to show definite results for the three months' labours of the session.

Immediately after the prorogation Lord Elgin started on a tour to the western confines of the Province, and extending thence to the mining regions of the upper lakes. His reception, wherever he went, was of the most cordial nature, and his aptly eloquent responses to the numberless addresses which poured in upon him tended to increase his already wide popularity. Soon after his return to the seat of Government he received a visit from Sir Edmund Head, who had examined him for a Merton Fellowship at Oxford seventeen years before, and was destined to succeed him as Governor-General of Canada.

The close of the year 1850 was marked by the advent of a more prosperous condition of things than had been known in Canada since the Union. The commercial depression of the preceding two or three years had given way to a large measure of prosperity, which seemed all the greater by force of contrast. An early, genial spring had been followed by a delightful summer. The harvest had been unusually large in all parts of the Province, and had been garnered with scarcely any drawbacks from bad weather. Prices were good, and money was plentiful. It was noticeable that there was an increased demand for the comforts, and even for the luxuries of life, combined with the ability to procure and pay for them. Merchants remarked that their accounts were paid with unusual promptitude. The entire community seemed to be imbued with a feeling of confidence in the future. There was a considerable immigration during the year of a class of persons whose settlement in the country was certain to be beneficial. The repeal of the strict navigation laws produced its legitimate effect, and an unprecedented number of foreign vessels entered Canadian ports during the season. Trade had widely extended its area, and business

throughout the land was brisk. Enterprises which had been abandoned or deferred, in some instances from want of capital, and in others from want of confidence in the future, were now taken up with healthful energy. The canals did a flourishing business, and several railways were in course of construction. The Custom House returns furnished unmistakable indications of the improvement in trade. The net receipts for the year showed the remarkable increase of fifty per cent. The revenue derived from Public Works showed a corresponding increase. The manifold excitements of the preceding year had quieted down, and the annexation project was dead and buried. In October the first Provincial exhibition of agricultural and industrial products was held at Montreal, and though it was an insignificant affair as compared with the displays of more recent times, it tended to stimulate the agricultural and manufacturing community to renewed efforts, and was regarded as a decided success. Arrangements were made for the suitable representation of Canadian products at the World's Fair, to be held in Hyde Park, London, England, in the following year. It may here be added that these arrangements were successfully carried out, and that our country figured with credit at the Great Exhibition of 1851, several prizes and medals having been awarded to Canadian exhibitors.

But while the commercial outlook was thus encouraging, there were evidences of much restlessness in the domestic politics. The acts of the Government were keenly scrutinized, alike by friend and foe. Certain appointments of Tories to offices of emolument were regarded by ministerial supporters with disfavour. Soon after the close of the session some of the ministerial organs in both sections of the Province began to assume a decidedly independent attitude towards the Government. The *Globe*, which had all along fought the ministerial battles with great firmness and vigour, and which had denounced the Clear Grits for their endeavours to break up the Reform party, began to take a critical stand. There was a

manifest disposition to compel the Ministry to formulate a distinct policy—more especially on the subject of the Clergy Reserves—and to communicate it to the country.* As yet, however, there was no open rupture between the *Globe* and the Government, and the year passed away in tranquillity. During the latter days of December Mr. Merritt resigned his place as Commissioner of Public Works. His resignation was due, not to any quarrel with his colleagues, but to his peculiar views respecting the financial policy—a policy which his colleagues regarded as wholly impracticable, and which they were consequently not disposed to adopt. He remained on the most friendly terms with the members of the Ministry, and continued to discharge the duties of his office for some weeks after his formal resignation. And so the curtain fell upon the not unattractive performance of 1850.

* "The party in power has no policy before the country. No one knows what measures are to be brought forward by the leaders. Each man fancies a policy for himself. The conductors of the public press must take ground on all the questions of the day, and each accordingly strikes out such a line as suits his own leanings, the palate of his readers, or what he deems for the good of the country. All sorts of vague schemes are thus flung on the sea of public opinion to agitate the waters, with the triple result of poisoning the public mind, producing unnecessary divisions, and committing sections of the party to views and principles which they might never have enunciated under a better system. The want of a clear decided policy has on several occasions placed the Ministry apparently in positions which they never held. In all the fuss which has been created about retrenchment, we sincerely believe the parties most desirous to retrench were the Ministry, and yet they have appeared to be opposed to it. The cry has been all vague generality—not a hint has been given as to details by the clamourers: and instead of lying off, as they have done, and pointing out the absurdities of their opponents, had Ministers come out at once, saying what they could do, and what they could not, and why not, they would have stopped the clamour which has been, we believe, falsely raised against them on this score."—*Globe*, Tuesday, October 15th, 1850.





CHAPTER XXXI.

THE END OF THE GREAT MINISTRY.

"Le ministère présidé par MM. Lafontaine et Baldwin occupe sans contredit la plus belle époque de notre histoire. Ses actes sons là pour le démontrer. Sous l'égide de ces chefs habiles, le Canada a fait un pas immense dans la voie des réformes administratives, et vers la prospérité matérielle."—TURCOTTE: *Le Canada Sous l'Union;* Deuxième Partie, pp. 177, 178.

EARLY in the new year—on the 12th of February—Mr. Bourret succeeded to the Chief Commissionership of Public Works, and Mr. Merritt's withdrawal from the Ministry was complete. The new Commissioner retained the Presidency of the Council. The Hon. H. H. Killaly succeeded him as Assistant Commissioner, and a seat in the Cabinet thenceforward ceased to be a concomitant of that office. Her Majesty having assented to the Provincial Post Office Act of the preceding session, the office of Postmaster-General was made a ministerial one, and on the 22nd of February the Hon. James Morris was appointed to the position. Mr. Morris had amassed considerable wealth in commercial pursuits, and was an eminently practical man of business, greatly respected for his integrity and uprightness of character. Of the eight gentlemen now composing the Administration four only had seats in the Assembly, the remaining four—Messieurs Taché, Leslie, Bourret and Morris—being Legislative Councillors. It was an open secret that Mr. Price, Commissioner of Crown Lands, had resolved to withdraw from public life at the expiration of the existing Parliament, which was soon to assemble for its last session. There were rumours also of other impending

changes—rumours which were fully verified before the close of the year—and the opening of the session of 1851 was looked forward to with an unusual degree of interest.

A bye-election of some importance took place during the spring. By the death of Mr. David Thompson, member for Haldimand, in the month of February, that constituency was left without a representative in the Assembly, and within a month thereafter no fewer than five candidates appeared in the field as aspirants to the vacant seat. One only—Mr. Ranald McKinnon, of Caledonia—came out in the Conservative interest. The four Reform candidates were William Lyon Mackenzie, George Brown of the *Toronto Globe*, Jacob Turner and Horace Case. The campaign was conducted with extraordinary vigour by all the candidates, but it soon became evident that the contest would really lie between Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Brown.

Mr. Brown has already been introduced to the reader with sufficient particularity.* As to Mr. Mackenzie, circumstances had combined to give him a notoriety and importance somewhat more than commensurate with his intellectual endowments, which, however, were considerably above the average. His life had been an eventful one. He was born at Dundee, Forfarshire, Scotland, in 1795. Affliction seemed to be enamoured of his parts from his earliest infancy, for before he was a month old the death of his father left him to the sole charge of a widowed mother in very straitened circumstances. How he grew up from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to mature age, it boots not to tell in detail. He was brought into frequent contact with the woes of poverty. From his mother he inherited a high degree of mental energy and impulsiveness, which unfortunately, in his case, were not accompanied by anything like an equal share of prudence and judgment. Notwithstanding the disadvantages under which he laboured, he contrived

* *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 362-367.

to acquire what for one in his rank might be considered a good common education, which was improved in after life by much reading and study. He was for a short time a draper's apprentice, and was afterwards a clerk to a wood-merchant in Dundee. Having reached the age of nineteen, he embarked in a small mercantile business on his own account; but the venture proved unsuccessful, and was abandoned. After a sojourn in England, he in 1820 crossed the Atlantic and made his way to Upper Canada. He for a short time found employment in connection with the survey of the Lachine Canal, but soon afterwards embarked in business, first at York, and afterwards at Dundas, where he married, and achieved a fair share of commercial prosperity. His restless disposition, however, impelled him to constant change. In 1823 he removed to Queenston, and opened a general store. In 1824 he founded a newspaper called *The Colonial Advocate* at Queenston, and thenceforward became in some sort a public character. Up to this time he had troubled himself very little about politics; but as he never went into any enterprise in a half-hearted way, he now threw himself into this new pursuit with the aggressive energy characteristic of him. As a journalist he adopted the *rôle* of a public censor, and in the year 1824 there was no lack of subjects for legitimate animadversion in Upper Canada. He was a man of decidedly liberal convictions, and could not shut his eyes to the fact that many things in the body politic needed reforming. He assailed the Family Compact and their doings far more openly and mercilessly than Robert Gourlay had ever ventured to do. He was master of a direct and not ineffective literary style, and his paper obtained what in those days was considered a large circulation. Its fiery denunciations soon began to produce a visible effect upon the public mind. After publishing it at Queenston about six months, Mr. Mackenzie removed to York, where he carried on his enterprise with undiminished vigour. The oligarchy were fiercely

lashed, and the selfish greed of some of the officials was from time to time held up to public execration. A democratic atmosphere began to blow over the Province from end to end, and questions began to be asked which the shrewdest of the oligarchs found it exceedingly difficult to answer. Mr. Mackenzie doubtless fought the battle of Reform in those days with entire honesty of purpose, but the *rôle* he had assigned to himself was a most harassing one, and his aggressive, irritable temper did not tend to make it easier. He lacked discretion, and seldom calculated consequences beforehand. Never was there a man less fitted for the trade of a diplomatist. His mode of writing about persons in authority was always unconciliatory, and frequently abusive; and he contrived to make himself the object of a hatred and contempt almost ferocious on the part of the faction which he assailed. Thus matters went on for some time. In June, 1826, his printing office was broken into by "a genteel mob," as it has been called, which was chiefly made up of persons more or less closely connected with the dominant faction in York. The office was wrecked, the face of the type was battered, and a portion of it thrown into the bay. The rioters were promptly proceeded against by Mr. Mackenzie, civilly as well as criminally. He received a considerable sum by way of damages, and before the close of the year the *Advocate* was again in full swing. The press-riot and the subsequent proceedings were the means of bringing his name very prominently before the public. A great deal of sympathy was felt and expressed for him as a sincere and zealous upholder of popular rights. It was said, and with truth, that he had brought down upon his head the odium of the Compact by manfully speaking up for the people. A decided impetus was given to his fortunes, and in 1828 the county of York returned him as one of its representatives in the Assembly. The oligarchy, which had long contemplated his increasing influence with anxiety, were moved to profound disgust by his elevation to legislative honours.

They at that time commanded a majority in the Assembly, and a series of persecutions were set on foot against him with a view to keeping him out of the House. Parliamentary proceedings were instituted against him for breach of privilege, for having at various times, and without authority, published in his newspaper more or less voluminous reports of the doings in the Legislature. An obsolete rule of the House of Assembly sustained the letter of the prosecution, and Mr. Mackenzie was expelled. The electors of the county of York testified their disapproval of the expulsion by reëlecting him. The same proceedings were gone through again, and were followed by a second expulsion. His constituency still stood faithful, and again reëlected him. Thus was the farce kept up for several years, until Mr. Mackenzie had been elected and expelled five times. His popularity increased with every expulsion, for his cause was now identified in the public mind with that of the freedom of the press. It was evident to all that he was subjected to malignant persecution for no other reason than because he had exposed the shortcomings of persons in high places, and, in the language of that day, had refused to bow the knee to Baal. There was no pretence that in his capacity of a member of the Legislature he had done anything worthy of censure. The Assembly at last recognized the fact that it was useless to resort to further expulsions, for his constituency was evidently prepared to continue to return him to the end of the chapter. The only means whereby he could be kept out of the House was by refraining from issuing another writ for an election, and this arbitrary course was resorted to. The county of York was thus left with only one representative in the Assembly during a period of about three years. In 1832 Mr. Mackenzie repaired to England with the famous Petition of Grievances. He remained there more than a year, during which he was frequently received at the Colonial Office, where his representations on Canadian affairs were listened to with respect, and in several

instances acted upon. Soon after his return to Canada the town of York became the city of Toronto, and he was elected the first mayor. At the general election of 1834 he was returned to the Assembly for the Second Riding of York, and was enabled to take his seat in spite of the machinations of his foes. In 1836 Sir Francis Bond Head, the Lieutenant-Governor, dissolved Parliament, and a new election was held. The Executive resorted to most improper means to prevent the return of persons obnoxious to them, among whom Mr. Mackenzie occupied the foremost place. He was beaten, and felt that he had not been beaten fairly. Up to this time, though he had always been a cantankerous and somewhat impracticable man, there had never been any grounds for impugning his loyalty. The machinations employed against him, however, had thoroughly disgusted him. No need to tell the story of the rebellion here. Mr. Mackenzie's share in it has already been referred to,* as have also his long exile, his struggles to obtain a livelihood for himself and his family, and his subsequent return to Canada, after the passing of the Amnesty Act of 1849.† In 1837, and for years after, he had been an ardent republican. A long and close contemplation of United States polity had abated his ardour, and he had become, if not a zealous monarchist, at any rate an advocate of British institutions in preference to those of the land wherein his exile had been passed. At the period at which the narrative has now arrived he was fifty-six years of age. The storms that had passed over his head had left their impress upon him, by deepening the lines of his countenance and his character. He was conscious of misdirected energies, and serious errors of judgment. He was still, however, before all other things, an agitator. He retained much of the superabundant energy by which he had always been characterized, and was as ready to do battle for a chimera as for a well-settled conviction.

**Ante*, Vol. I., p. 313. †*Ante*, pp. 137, 138.

Such was the man who presented himself to the electors of Haldimand as Mr. Brown's most formidable opponent. The election came off during the third week in April. Mr. Brown offered himself as a member of the Reform party, differing in opinion on some points from the existing Government, but regarding that Government as by far the best that the country had ever had, and better than any other which could then be formed. He professed his determination to give them a general support. Mr. Mackenzie, on the other hand, offered himself as an independent candidate opposed to the Ministry. The key-note of his election cry was: "Beware of Mr. Brown, the advocate of high salaries and pensions, and the apologist of the Court of Chancery, bound hand and foot to a political party!" Such ebullitions as this would probably have done Mr. Brown little or no harm; but the latter gentleman's defeat was a foregone conclusion from the beginning of the contest. There were reasons which made Mr. Brown an unpopular candidate at that time in a constituency which, like that of Haldimand, contained a large Roman Catholic population. The Pope's bull creating a Papal hierarchy in Great Britain had been followed, towards the close of 1850, by the appointment of Cardinal Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster. English Protestants regarded the action of the Vatican as presumptuous and aggressive. Coming, as it did, in the wake of the Tractarian excitement, it aroused an indignant anti-popery feeling in England such as had not been exhibited there for more than a hundred years. This feeling was vividly reflected among the Protestant population of Canada. Mr. Brown had been bred a Presbyterian, and he entertained the "No Popery" sentiments common among the adherents of that faith. On the 19th of December, 1850, he published in the *Globe* a copy of Cardinal Wiseman's famous manifesto, accompanied by a long and trenchant article written from a strictly Protestant point of view. The alarm having thus been sounded, the subject was taken up by the press of the country,

Catholic and Protestant, and an amount of irritation was expended altogether disproportionate to the occasion. Mr. Brown returned to the subject in the *Globe* again and again, and his cue was followed by a considerable section of the Protestant press of the Province. In this way he came to be regarded by the Roman Catholic population as the especial champion of Protestantism in Canada, and as the bitter opponent of their own most cherished doctrines. This notoriety was made the most of by his opponents in Haldimand, and was doubtless the chief cause of his defeat. Mr. Mackenzie was returned at the head of the poll, and for seven years thereafter sat in the Assembly for the constituency.

During the early months of 1851 various rumours were from time to time heard to the effect that a successor to Lord Elgin had been appointed, and that his Excellency's term of office as Governor of Canada was rapidly drawing to a close. Among the persons accredited as his successor were Lord Saltoun, Sir John Harvey and Sir Denis Le Marchant. In each case the rumour was easily attributable to a Tory source, and it may fairly be presumed that in each case the wish was father to the thought. As matter of fact, no such changes were in contemplation, and Lord Elgin's position at the Colonial Office was practically impregnable. As the months passed by, it was noticeable that the hostility of the Tory press to the Government—a hostility which had become specially intense since the agitation consequent on the Rebellion Losses Bill —began to perceptibly abate. A similar tendency was noticeable in the personal relations between leading public men of opposite political convictions. For this there were various reasons. A lull may confidently be expected after a furious storm, and the storm of 1849 had been furious beyond precedent in Canadian annals since the days of the rebellion. The Tory party not only smarted under a sense of defeat, but felt conscious that their defeat had been rendered more crushing by their own imprudence. They had placed

themselves at a disadvantage with the Home Government, and had disgusted the more moderate of their own supporters in the Province. There were numerous defections from their ranks, and as a party they were much disorganized. Their fury had largely spent itself, and its consequences had recoiled upon them. They had become alive to the fact that public opinion would not sustain them in waging war *à l'outrance* on questions of minor importance. Such would appear to have been the factors which dictated the Tory policy of the year 1851. As has been seen, the Reform party was also disorganized. The Clear Grits had become more pronounced in their opposition to the Government than were the Tories themselves. Mr. Brown was the leader of a small following opposed both to the Tories and the Clear Grits, and supported the Government in a very lukewarm and independent fashion. Under such auspices the fourth and last session of the Third Parliament met at Toronto on the 20th of May.

Mr. Mackenzie's reappearance in the Canadian Parliamentary arena was an event in its way, and was referred to in England as evidence of the short memories of Canadians.* Another new member who deserves special mention was M. Luc Letellier, known to us in comparatively recent days as Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec. He was then thirty-one years of age; a notary by profession, and a Liberal in politics. He took his seat as member for Kamouraska, a constituency wherein the lines of party have from time immemorial been drawn with exceptional rigidity.

The opening Speech referred to the era of prosperity which had set in, and, as usual, suggested the nature of some of the most important measures contemplated by the Government. The most noticeable feature of the early days of the session was the adoption by the Assembly, at a single sitting, and by a unanimous vote, of the Address in Reply. Sir Allan MacNab prepared certain amendments

*See *Colonial Gazette* for July, 1851.

relating to the Clergy Reserves and the proposed increase in the Parliamentary representation; but he contented himself with merely placing these amendments on the table, without moving them. The proximity of a general election, and the desire to avoid positively committing themselves on the burning questions of the time, may have had some influence in inducing the Tories to consent to the peaceful adoption of the Address; but as the session advanced it became more and more evident that party animosities had been to a great extent laid aside by the Tories, and that there was comparatively little disposition to take up the time of the House merely for the purpose of embarrassing the Government. The only strong opposition which the Government were called upon to encounter emanated from William Lyon Mackenzie and the Clear Grits; but this opposition, as will presently be seen, was destined to produce important consequences.

The railway legislation of the session was of primary importance. The great activity in railway construction displayed in the neighbouring republic had begun to be distinctly reflected in this Province. Railway activity, indeed, had become a Provincial necessity. In former years it had been believed that the completion of the canal system would secure for Canada a large share of the trade of the Western States. Such a belief had been a reasonable deduction from the facts; but the advent of the railway era wrought a complete revolution in the aspect of affairs. The construction of American railways bade fair to divert, not only the carrying-trade of the Western States, but even that of Western Canada, to American lines. Such a diversion could only be prevented by the construction of Canadian railways. "Unless Canada could combine with her unrivalled inland navigation a railroad system connected therewith, and mutually sustaining each other, the whole of her large outlay must forever remain unproductive." *

* "Canada: 1849 to 1859," by the Hon. A. T. Galt; p. 25.

Such were the facts which stared Canadian statesmen in the face at the period under consideration, and they were facts which did not admit of dispute. The railway epoch had reached its practical stage, and some of the leading capitalists were busying themselves in maturing important enterprises for the development of the country. The Government, ever since their accession to power, had been compelled to bestow much attention upon the subject. It was during this session that Mr. Hincks's Act to make provision for the construction of a main trunk line from Quebec to the Western confines of the Province was passed. In undertaking such a gigantic enterprise it was not intended that Canada should depend entirely upon her own resources. Parliament contemplated offering such inducements as might attract the attention of capitalists, and legislation was framed with that end in view. Aid was also expected from the Home Government, in the shape of a guaranteed loan. Such aid had been promised to Nova Scotia for the construction of a military line between Halifax and Quebec; and it was now hoped that the scheme might be extended so as to apply to the line westward. In the event of this hope proving fallacious, the Province contemplated building the line on her own credit, with the assistance of the municipalities most directly interested in the enterprise, and of such private capitalists as might be induced to embark in it. In case of the Imperial guarantee being granted, the Governor was authorized to make arrangements with the Governments of Great Britain and the Maritime Provinces for the construction of the intercolonial road from Halifax to Quebec, and of the line thence westward to Hamilton. Authority was also conferred upon the Governor in Council to apply any or all ungranted lands, to the extent of ten miles on each side of the line, in furtherance of the work, which, it was confidently believed, would, when completed, give Canada a practical monopoly of the carrying-trade of the Great West. The Canadian reader scarcely needs to be

informed that out of these projects were developed the lines subsequently known respectively as the Grand Trunk and Intercolonial.

The rest of the legislation of the session must be very briefly disposed of. Acts were passed providing for the trial of Parliamentary Election Petitions; for the introduction of the decimal system into the Provincial currency; and for taking a periodical census. A measure prepared and introduced by Mr. Hincks made important changes in the territorial divisions of Upper Canada, for judicial, municipal and other purposes. Mr. Baldwin introduced and carried through an Act whereby a great change was made in the law regulating the descent of real property in cases of intestacy in Upper Canada. It abolished the doctrine of primogeniture as applied to real estate, and enacted that the lands of an intestate held in fee simple or for the life of another should descend to all his children equally; females inheriting equally with males in the same degree. An equitable division was also provided for in case of there being no children or other lineal descendants. The plan of descent and inheritance introduced by this Act is based on the Civil Law, and bears a close analogy to the mode of succession to personal estate established under a statute passed in the reign of Charles II., and known as the Statute of Distributions. Mr. Lafontaine introduced for the third time his project for increasing the representation. The vote upon it stood 55 to 18, so that it was, as in 1849,* defeated by only one vote—the required majority being two-thirds, or 56 out of 84. An Address to the Queen, proposed by Mr. Merritt, with a view to the convocation of an assembly of Provincial delegates to consider the project of a general confederation of all the British North American Provinces, was supported by only seven votes. The subject of the Seigniorial tenure came before the House too late in the session to admit of any decisive legislative action being taken upon it. It had been referred to a select committee, with Mr. Drummond,

* *Ante*, p. 142, *note*.

Solicitor-General East, as chairman. The committee had not been able to make much progress. Their time had been occupied in attempts to define the rights of the seigniors, and the legislation outlined by them was objectionable to Mr. Lafontaine on the ground that it provided no real settlement of the question, and was in reality a measure of confiscation.* Legislative proceedings relative to the tenure were accordingly once more postponed. The Clergy Reserve question was similarly dealt with. A despatch from Earl Grey, announcing that Her Majesty's Government had been compelled to postpone to another session the introduction of a Bill authorizing the Canadian Legislature to deal with the matter, was communicated to the Assembly. That House passed an Address thanking Her Majesty for the gracious manner in which she had been pleased to receive the Address of the previous session; and there, for the time, the matter rested. An attempt was renewed by Mr. H. J. Boulton to bring about immediate Provincial legislation on the subject, but the reasons against the adoption of such a course were weightier than ever since the passing of the Address in 1850, whereby the question had been formally relegated to the hands of the Home Government. Mr. Boulton's attempt was a signal failure, the vote upon his proposal standing 52 to 5. Certain reports unfavourable to the Ministry, however, began to get abroad. Mr. Brown had gradually been drifting farther and farther away from the Government. He was conscious of having merited consideration at their hands by his services to them and to the Reform party, and he was dissatisfied because ministerial influence had not been actively exerted in his favour during his campaign in Haldimand. As matter of fact, the Government would have much preferred the election of Mr. Brown to that of Mr. Mackenzie, but the latter had been put forward by old and influential Reformers

* On this subject see "The Seigniorial Question. Its Present Position." By a Member of the Legislative Assembly from Upper Canada (Mr. Hincks); Quebec, 1854.

in the county, and the Ministry had not deemed it expedient to interfere. Mr. Brown now assumed an attitude of open hostility to them, and criticized some of their acts and omissions with considerable vehemence. The Clergy Reserves question was one upon which he felt very strongly. He was eager for secularization, and opposed to any farther delay. His crusade against what he regarded as Roman Catholic aggression had made him very much disliked by the French Canadians, nearly all of whom professed the Roman Catholic faith. He was ready enough to retort this dislike, and it displeased him to see the Upper Canadian members of the Ministry acting in concert with those from the Lower section of the Province on questions of a quasi-religious character: such, for instance, as grants to denominational institutions, and the establishment of sectarian schools and colleges. In these opinions he was not altogether singular, although his personal following at that time was small, as he had no sentiment in common with the Clear Grits except a desire to see the Clergy Reserves secularized at once. But his opinions were given to the public through the medium of the *Globe*, and thus obtained wide circulation; so that even in some quarters where they did not find entire acceptance, they were more or less prejudicial to the Government. It was well known that Messieurs Lafontaine, Cauchon, Chauveau, and indeed most of the prominent French Canadians were not anxious to see the views of the ultra-secularists carried out. They were in favour of the repeal of the Imperial Act, and of an equitable settlement by the Canadian Legislature, but they had voted against one of Mr. Price's resolutions which affirmed that "no religious denomination can be held to have such vested interests in the revenue derived from the proceeds of the said Clergy Reserves as should prevent further legislation with reference to the disposal of them." The *Globe* now censured the Upper Canadian Ministers for assenting to the introduction of the Rebellion Losses Bill until

the French Canadian members had pledged themselves to support secularization. Here Mr. Brown's enthusiasm led him to indicate approval of a course which his own maturer judgment would doubtless have condemned. Such a proceeding as the one suggested by him would certainly not have commended itself to such men as Messieurs Lafontaine and Baldwin, and, as Sir Francis Hincks remarks, would have been justly characterized as log-rolling.* Mr. Brown's patience, however, was exhausted. He had, moreover, begun to suspect Ministers of double-dealing, and he even went so far as to express a suspicion that Lord Grey had received a hint from the Provincial Cabinet that the latter were averse to prompt action in the matter of the Reserves. There does not seem to have been the slightest ground for such a suspicion.† All the well-known facts point to the conclusion that Earl Grey's postponement was entirely voluntary; that is to say, that it was wholly unconnected with any suggestion to that effect from the Provincial Government. His only objects appear to have been to ensure the success of the proposed Bill, and to avoid stirring up fruitless opposition to the Administration of which he was a member. The Imperial Government were weak, more especially in the Upper House, where, owing to the presence and influence of the bishops, the proposed Bill was certain to be a most unpopular measure. The Government, indeed, had actually been defeated and compelled to resign in the month of February, and had only been reinstated in consequence of the inability of both Lord Stanley and Lord Aberdeen to form a Ministry. Early in the following year (1852) the Government fell to pieces on the Local Militia Bill. Carrying on the business of the country under such difficulties as they encountered all through

* "The Political History of Canada," etc., by the Hon. Sir Francis Hincks; p. 59.

† "Lord Elgin's reputation stands, I think, sufficiently high to shield him from the imputation of such a trick; and Messieurs Lafontaine and Baldwin were not men to whom such practices were imputed by those most in opposition to them."—*Ib.*, p. 59.

the year 1851, it is not surprising that they should have postponed the introduction of a measure which would be certain to meet with strong opposition; a measure, moreover, of which they did not themselves approve, and which they only undertook to introduce from a sense of what was due to the colonial constitution.

The Provincial legislation of the session of 1851 consisted of 170 Acts. A measure which did not receive the sanction of a majority, and which therefore did not become law, now requires to be mentioned, because of its ulterior consequences, rather than from any special significance attaching to the measure itself. Reference has already been made to the Chancery Act of 1849, and to the reforms effected thereunder in the practice and management of the Court. That measure had been introduced and carried through under the auspices of Mr. Baldwin. It had been found to work well, and the Court of Chancery in Upper Canada had begun to be regarded as a court of equity in fact as well as in name. The Clear Grits, however, as has been seen, had made the abolition of the Court a plank in their platform, and William Lyon Mackenzie, who had practically allied himself with the Clear Grits (though he still called himself an Independent), now brought forward a motion in accordance with their views. His proposition was that the Court of Chancery should be done away with, and that an enlarged equitable jurisdiction should be conferred upon the Courts of Common Law. The motion came on towards the end of June. It was voted down, but it received the support of a majority of the Upper Canadian members of Parliament, many of whom belonged to the legal profession, and might be supposed to be specially capable of forming an intelligent opinion on such a question. Mr. Baldwin, who felt himself responsible for the Court of Chancery, as it then existed, took this vote very much to heart. The question was one affecting Upper Canada only, and the motion was defeated by the votes of the French Canadian members, who had no interest in the matter, and who merely voted

upon it at the bidding of their leader, Mr. Lafontaine. Mr. Baldwin was no stickler for the double-majority principle, but he felt that this was an exceptional question. If the Upper Canadian lawyers wanted to be rid of the Court of Chancery he was not disposed to force it upon them by virtue of a French Canadian majority. He regarded the Upper Canadian vote as indicative of non-confidence in himself, and so deep was his mortification that he resigned office. His announcement of his resignation was received in the Assembly with universal expressions of regret. Several gentlemen who had voted for Mr. Mackenzie's motion declared that they would not have done so had they supposed it would produce such a result. Sir Allan MacNab and other Tories referred feelingly to Mr. Baldwin's great services to the country; and by more than one he was asked to reconsider his determination. But he had fully made up his mind, and his decision was irrevocable. Mr. Hincks and the other Upper Canadian members of the Cabinet approved of Mr. Baldwin's resignation, and signified their own willingness to follow the example. Mr. Baldwin, however, in the interests of the Reform party, requested them not to do so, and they for the time remained in office. Mr. Lafontaine passed a warm eulogy upon his retiring colleague, and announced that the latter would continue to act as Attorney-General until the appointment of his successor. Mr. Lafontaine also took the unusual step of announcing that he himself would retire from public life at or soon after the close of the session.

The session was brought to a close on the 31st of August. Within a month afterwards Lord Elgin and many other influential Canadians visited Boston, and took part in the railway jubilee held in celebration of the completing of several lines of communication. His Excellency made one of his characteristically apt and effective speeches on the occasion, and thereby produced a decided impression even upon an audience familiar with the polished periods of

Edward Everett.* His Excellency's visit tended to place the good feeling which had been established between Great Britain and the States on a still firmer basis; and for a time Her Majesty, to quote Lord Elgin himself, was "as much cheered and lauded in New England as in any part of Old England."† During the month of October Mr. Lafontaine carried out his resolution, and retired from office. His colleagues followed his example, and the Great Ministry was no more.

The Great Ministry. Yes; for everything in this world is relative, and when the work of the second Lafontaine-Baldwin Ministry is fairly contrasted with that of other Canadian Ministries of its epoch, it must be acknowledged to have been great at least by comparison. No Administration known to our history has ever effected so much during an equal space of time. None has contained so many men whose abilities entitled them to rank among colonial statesmen, as contradistinguished from mere politicians. It inherited several cumbrous and most undesirable legacies, with some of which it was imperatively called upon to deal. It was consequently subjected to attacks which would have broken in pieces any Government which was not strong in a moral as well as in a political sense. Much of its legislation survives to the present day, and is a fitting monument to the justice, rectitude and broad statesmanship of its members. There is no need to review in detail the various Acts which signalized its too brief reign; the more important of them having already been enumerated and commented upon. The thorough reform of the municipal system, and of the election, education and assessment laws; the establishment of the Provincial credit abroad; the obtaining of the control of the Provincial Post Office, and the establishment of cheap

* Both Mr. Everett and Joseph Howe, of Halifax (the latter incomparably the greater natural orator of the two), were present at the celebration, and delivered eloquent addresses.

† Walrond, p. 162.

and uniform rates of postage; the reform and remodelling of the courts of law in both sections of the Province; the amendment of the exclusive charter of King's College, and the establishment of the University of Toronto on a non-sectarian basis; the granting of a general amnesty for the misdeeds of 1837-'38; the abolition of the doctrine of primogeniture in Upper Canada as applied to real estate; the inauguration of railway legislation—these are a few among the many achievements for which the thanks of posterity are due to the Great Ministry which directed Canadian affairs from March, 1848, to October, 1851. With respect to the Clergy Reserves and the Seigniorial Tenure, only the first steps had been taken, and it remained for a Coalition Government to carry out, three years later, the schemes which two Reform Administrations had spent much time and labour in bringing to maturity.

Mr. Lafontaine's retirement was due to a combination of circumstances. He did not assign any definite grounds for his determination, even to his colleagues, but his reasons are not difficult to arrive at. He was a man of refined and scholarly tastes, and had never been enthusiastically devoted to the ceaseless worry and turmoil of public life. His Parliamentary career had, notwithstanding, been a brilliant and useful one, and he now had it in his power to retire with a spotless record and an honoured name. He enjoyed the respect of the entire Province, and he felt that he could not count upon being able to withdraw under equally favourable circumstances at a future time. He saw that it would erelong be absolutely necessary for Parliament to deal with various questions as to which he was not fully in accord with public opinion. His respect for vested rights prevented him from sympathizing with the views of extremists with regard to the Seigniorial Tenure and the Clergy Reserves. Though he was a man of large and liberal mind, he was firm and unyielding in his views, and he well knew that he was growing more Conservative year by year. He moreover felt that in the

event of his remaining in the Government he would seriously feel the loss of Mr. Baldwin. Everything pointed to the same conclusion. His best policy was to retire while he was in the plenitude of his power, leaving it to other hands to gather the crop which he had helped to sow. Although, owing to his silence on the matter, the foregoing reasons cannot be set down as definitely-ascertained historical facts, yet their plausibility is such that they are at least worthy of being recorded as throwing light upon a passage in our history which is greatly misunderstood.

Mr. Lafontaine's resignation produced as widespread a regret throughout his own section of the Province as that of Mr. Baldwin had produced in Upper Canada. He resumed, for a time, the active practice of his profession in Montreal. In the month of August, 1853, he was appointed to the high office of Chief Justice of Lower Canada, which had been left vacant by the death of Sir James Stuart. In 1854 he was created a Baronet, contemporaneously with the conferring of a similar honour upon the Chief Justice of Upper Canada. He continued to sit on the bench as Chief Justice down to the period of his death, which took place at the city of Montreal on the 26th of February, 1864. He was confessedly one of the ablest jurists that ever sat on the Canadian bench, and his decisions are regarded with the highest respect by his successors.

Mr Baldwin, as has been said, felt very keenly the vote of the Upper Canadian lawyers in the Assembly on Mr. Mackenzie's Chancery motion. Another mortification was in store for him. At the ensuing general election he offered himself as a candidate for his old constituency, the North Riding of York. The influences of the times were not propitious to him. The Clear Grits brought out a candidate in the person of Mr. Joseph Hartman, a gentleman then unknown in the political world. A cry was raised during the campaign that Mr. Baldwin was averse to secularizing the Clergy Reserves, and that he had surrendered himself to French

Canadian influence on the subject of representation by population. Pledges were demanded from him which he refused to give. "I am not here," he remarked, "to pledge myself on any question. I go to the House as a free man or not at all. I am here to declare to you my opinions. If you approve of my opinions, and elect me, I will carry them out in Parliament. If I should alter those opinions I will come back and surrender my trust, when you will have an opportunity of either reëlecting me or choosing another candidate; but I shall pledge myself at the bidding of no man." On the subject of an elective Legislative Council, moreover, Mr. Baldwin was not in sympathy with the popular feeling in his constituency. He believed in continuing the system of appointments by the Crown, as provided by the Act of Union, whereas popular sentiment favoured the election of Legislative Councillors by public vote. Upon the whole, Mr. Baldwin was too Conservative for the times, and the combined influences brought to bear against him were fatal to his candidature. Mr. Hartman was returned at the head of the poll, and Mr. Baldwin retired to private life, from which he never again emerged.

Before taking a final leave of Mr. Baldwin, it seems desirable to correct a very general misapprehension which prevails as to his attitude on the Clergy Reserves question at the date of his resignation. This misapprehension is due in great measure to a statement in Mr. MacMullen's history of Canada, a statement which has been adopted by subsequent writers who have not taken the trouble to investigate the matter for themselves. We are informed by Mr. MacMullen that "Mr. Lafontaine, Mr. Baldwin, and others of the older Reformers, opposed the revival of the agitation"—*i.e.*, on the subject of the Clergy Reserves—"and maintained that things ought to be left as they were."* Now, this was certainly the attitude of the gentlemen referred to prior to the general election which resulted

* "History of Canada," p. 514.

in the formation of the second Lafontaine-Baldwin Government in 1848; but it is very misleading, at least so far as regards Mr. Baldwin, when it implies that his views had undergone no change before his resignation in 1851. The impression is conveyed, indeed, that he resigned office in consequence of his unwillingness to interfere with the settlement under Lord Sydenham. That no member of the Government was unwilling to interfere with that settlement was rendered abundantly clear by the significant fact that every one of them voted for its repeal. Not only was Mr. Baldwin not averse to secularization, but he was actually desirous of seeing it brought about. He was a zealous Churchman, and, like Mr. Lafontaine, he had a great respect for vested rights, but he did not approve of perpetuating vested wrongs. Before the Union he had repeatedly expressed himself unfavourably to the exclusive claims of the Church of England. He was not opposed on principle to State endowments for religious purposes; but he recognized the fact that such endowments were neither necessary nor desirable in Canada. He well knew that their continuance was an injury to the Province, and he believed them to be an injury to the Church itself.* As has been seen,† he deprecated the revival of the question in Parliament during Mr. Sherwood's tenure of office as Solicitor-General. This, however, was clearly because the project of revival emanated from the Church of England, which, in his opinion, already enjoyed all the rights to which it could possibly substantiate a just claim, and he was apprehensive that the Church would not only reap no additional advantage from a renewal of the agitation, but would render itself more unpopular than ever among other denominations of Christians. His respect for vested interests prevented him from setting on foot any agita-

* In an unpublished letter written to a friend in Toronto on the 4th of May, 1851, occurs the following significant sentence: "They [the Reserves] are an injury to the Church of Christ, and probably to the Church of England in Canada."

† *Ante*, p. 202.

tion on the subject, even in later times; but when it had once been set on foot by others, and when public opinion had made itself clear, he became fully alive to the injustice of allowing matters to remain as they were. His sense of right prevailed over every other consideration, and the Father of Responsible Government recognized the supremacy of the majority. The more he thought upon the subject the more did his mind expand, as may plainly be discerned from his utterances during the sessions of 1850 and 1851. He voted for Mr. Price's resolutions, and it was well understood by his colleagues that he would vote for secularization when the proper time for doing so should arrive; that is to say, when the repeal of the Imperial Act of 1840 should enable the Canadian Legislature to deal with the question.* But his constituents in North York would accept nothing less than a distinct pledge in 1851, and such a pledge he was not disposed to give. As to his resignation, in spite of all that has been said and written to the contrary, it was due, as above stated, to the vote on the Court of Chancery, and to no other cause whatever.

Though he was only in his forty-eighth year at the time of his withdrawal from public life, his constitution—never very robust —was considerably impaired by his close application to his ministerial and Parliamentary duties, and he never again came conspicuously before the world in any capacity. A seat on the judicial bench was in vain pressed upon his acceptance. In 1854 he accepted the dignity of a Companionship of the Bath, which was the only reward he ever received for his long and important services to the colony and the Empire. He continued to reside on his estate of Spadina, in the immediate neighbourhood of Toronto, where he passed his time in the exercise of domestic and devotional duties during the few years of life which remained to him. He

* On this subject, see Sir Francis Hincks's Lecture on the Political History of Canada, pp. 50-52.

lingered until the 9th of December, 1858, when he calmly passed to his rest. No Canadian statesman has left behind him a name more highly honoured by all classes of the community. To this day Canada points to Robert Baldwin as the man who spent himself in contending, through evil report and good report, for a righteous principle; who rested not until the claims of truth and justice had been conceded and secured; who passed unscathed through the ordeal of a trying period in our political life, and who yet left behind him a reputation at which the finger of reproach has never dared to point.





CHAPTER XXXII.

HINCKS–MORIN.

"Whatever else has been gained, it is clear that two dangers have been avoided by the Reform party, by the formation of the new Ministry on the basis that has been adopted. The first was that the divisions which have existed in the party for the last two years might continue through the elections; with the certain result that neither section would have obtained a majority. The second—and it would have been consequent on this—was a coalition between the Tories and the Lower Canadians."—*Toronto Examiner.*

DURING the three months immediately preceding the resignation of the Ministry, a chaotic state of affairs prevailed in political circles. The portfolio of Attorney-General West was practically vacant, for although Mr. Baldwin, according to the prevalent usage, nominally held office until the appointment of his successor, he had ceased to take part in the direction of the Government, and did not attend at Cabinet meetings. The duties pertaining to the leadership for Upper Canada devolved upon Mr Hincks, whose knowledge and Parliamentary experience well fitted him to discharge them. Mr. Lafontaine, in view of his own contemplated retirement, would not assign Mr. Baldwin's portfolio to any one else; nor would he entertain any proposals on the subject of ministerial changes. Yet important ministerial changes were imminent, and could not be postponed beyond the time of Mr. Lafontaine's resignation. Upon whom would devolve the task of forming a new Ministry, or of reconstructing that already in existence? "It may be said with truth"—remarks one of the most active participants * in the minis-

* Sir Francis Hincks, in a review of "The Scot in British North America," published in *The Canadian Spectator* for December 3rd, 1881. Sir Francis adds: "I never had the

terial embarrassments of the period—"that there was hardly a man of any influence, whether in or out of Parliament, who was not making forecasts of the future." The disunion in the Reform ranks was a serious matter, for it would be no easy task to make such an adjustment of the portfolios as should meet general approval, and a Tory Government, in the existing state of public opinion, was altogether out of the question.

The problem, however, found its solution. No sooner had Mr. Lafontaine tendered his resignation, early in October, than the Governor-General—who was then sojourning at Drummondville, near Niagara Falls—sent for Mr. Hincks, and committed to his charge the formation of a new Administration. Mr. Hincks was probably the shrewdest and most energetic man then in public life in this Province. He had long foreseen that the party-lines of the Reformers would have to be laid down afresh, and on a less rigid basis than would have seemed good to Messieurs Lafontaine and Baldwin. From the date of his accession to the leadership for Upper Canada his policy had been one of concession: concession to the French Canadians, to the Clear Grits, and indeed to any party which had it in its power to obstruct the carrying-on of public business. Upon receiving the Governor's commands to form a Government he put himself in communication with Dr. Rolph, who, though he was not then in Parliament, was the ruling spirit of the Clear Grit party—a party which it was absolutely necessary to conciliate. Mr. Lafontaine having retired from public life, Mr. Morin was by common consent the leader of the French Canadian Liberals; and with him Mr. Hincks also held frequent conferences. The negotiations occupied several weeks, and were not finally completed until nearly the end of October, by which time the offices of the Government, in pursuance of the alternating system which had

least doubt that, in publicly announcing his intention to resign at a future time, Mr. Lafontaine acted contrary to all British precedent, and created a state of affairs that might have led even to more serious consequences."

been adopted in 1849, had been removed to Quebec. The Governor-General himself had also removed thither, and taken up his quarters at Spencerwood, a pleasant mansion which had been purchased by the Government for a gubernatorial residence, and which was situated on the cliffs of Sillery, somewhat more than a mile westward from the city limits.

On the 28th of the month the members of the new Ministry* received the seals of office at Quebec, and entered upon the duties of administration. The distribution of portfolios was as follows:

FROM UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. Francis Hincks, Premier and Inspector-General.
" W. B. Richards, Attorney-General West.
" Malcolm Cameron, President of the Council.
" John Rolph, Commissioner of Crown Lands.
" James Morris, Postmaster-General.

* All except Mr. Cameron, who was not actually sworn in until some time afterwards. The delay was occasioned by his hesitation to accept the Presidency of the Council, an office as to which he had previously expressed his opinion that the duties appertaining to it might well be discharged by some member holding one of the other Government offices, whereby the salary of a President would be saved to the country. The *Globe* and the Tory press taunted him with his inconsistency, and he probably felt that the impeachment was not altogether groundless. He seems, however, to have been open to conviction on this subject—probably in consequence of the office of Minister of Agriculture being created and conferred upon him, as subsequently mentioned in the text.

Mr. Hincks does not seem to have contemplated the introduction of Mr. Cameron into the Ministry at all, until the claims of that gentleman, on party grounds, were pressed upon him by Dr. Rolph. The original intention was that Dr. Rolph should be President of the Council, and that Mr. J. S. Macdonald should be Commissioner of Crown Lands. The Doctor's stipulations as to Mr. Cameron were a source of embarrassment to Mr. Hincks, as there was not another office at his disposal, until Mr. Macdonald's refusal to accept the portfolio offered to him opened a way out of the difficulty. It was not deemed prudent to make Mr. Cameron Commissioner of Crown Lands, which office was accordingly assigned to Dr. Rolph. It was then arranged that the bureau of Agriculture should be attached to the Presidency of the Council—an arrangement subsequently carried out—and Mr. Cameron's scruples at accepting that office were got over.

FROM LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. A. N. Morin, Provincial Secretary.
" L. T. Drummond, Attorney-General East.
" John Young, Commissioner of Public Works.
" R. E. Caron, Speaker of the Legislative Council.
" E. P. Taché, Receiver-General.

The reader is already familiar with the personality of each of these gentlemen. Messieurs Hincks, Taché and Morris were not re-appointed to office, their resignations not having been accepted. A fortnight later Mr. P. J. O. Chauveau accepted the Solicitor-Generalship for Lower Canada, and Mr. John Ross accepted the corresponding post for Upper Canada.* Among various reforms to which the new Government stood committed were the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, the abolition of the Seigniorial Tenure, an increased Parliamentary representation, and an elective Legislative Council. The last-named project was one that Mr. Morin had long had at heart, and Mr. Hincks, who does not appear to have felt strongly on the subject either one way or the other, yielded the point in return for Mr. Morin's consent that secularization should be made a Cabinet question.

The new Government was unquestionably as strong a one as, under the circumstances, it was possible to form. Mr. Hincks's qualifications have just been referred to. Mr. Morin was, with the single exception of Mr. Lafontaine, who could no longer be taken into account, the most popular man in Lower Canada. He was respected and trusted by all, and his knowledge of the requirements of his compatriots was both profound and sympathetic. The only possible exception that could be taken to him was that he was somewhat deficient in energy, and could seldom be aroused to put forth

* A seat in the Cabinet was not attached to these offices.

his utmost strength. Mr. Drummond, the new Attorney-General East, was one of the ablest of Canadian lawyers. Mr. Young, though he had had no experience of political life, was a man of strict integrity and great practical ability, possessing a wide knowledge of the country's needs. Messieurs Caron, Taché and Morris were all well fitted for their respective offices; and Messieurs Rolph and Cameron brought much strength to the Government from their connection with the Clear Grit party,* which had become a recognized power in the land. With respect to Mr. Richards, the only remaining member of the Cabinet, it was objected to him in some quarters that his professional experience had not been such as to fit him for the high office of Attorney-General, but the legal profession generally admitted his fitness for the post, and his subsequent career, during his tenure of office and afterwards, has been such as to fully justify Mr. Hincks's choice. The selection, however, raised up for the Government a somewhat formidable opponent in the person of Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald, the ex-Solicitor-General West, who had confidently counted upon succeeding to the Attorney-Generalship, and who never quite forgave Mr. Hincks for passing him over. Mr. Hincks seems to have been fully cognizant of consequences when he selected Mr. Richards: consequences, it is to be presumed, which he would willingly have avoided; but he occupied a most responsible and embarrassing position, and was compelled to discriminate between a multitude of conflicting interests. He offered Mr. Macdonald the Commissionership of Crown Lands, but that gentleman would accept nothing short of the Attorney-Generalship, and was accordingly left out of the Ministry altogether.†

* Mr. Peter Perry, whose standing in the Clear Grit party had been as high as that of either Dr. Rolph or Mr. Cameron, died on the 24th of August, about two months before the formation of the Hincks-Morin Government.

† Upon this subject it is only fair to let Mr. Hincks tell his own story. In the review of "The Scot in British North America," in *The Canadian Spectator* for December 3rd,

The recognized organ of the Government in Upper Canada was *The North American*, which was still under the control of Mr. William McDougall. In the Lower Province the ministerial standard continued to be borne by *The Pilot*.

There was one conspicuous individual in Upper Canada who had long distrusted Mr. Hincks, and who viewed that gentleman's increasing ascendency with much disfavour. This was Mr. Brown, of the *Globe*, who, as we have seen, had passed during the year from a lukewarm supporter of the Government to an active opponent. He published in his paper a series of letters addressed to Mr. Hincks, in which the latter's alleged shortcomings were animadverted upon with much asperity. The Inspector-General was charged with shirking the Clergy Reserves question, and with having betrayed the interests of Upper Canada by surrendering himself to French

1881—already referred to in a note on page 245—we find the following account of the transaction referred to in the text: "When I was called on to form a new Administration, Mr. Macdonald was clearly not entitled by any traditional usage to the post of Attorney-General, which he had never filled. I had but one colleague left from Upper Canada, the Hon. James Morris, a member of the Legislative Council. I had to find three new colleagues and a Solicitor-General, and I had to exercise my judgment as to the departments which should be assigned to each. I recognized most fully Mr. Sandfield Macdonald's claims, but I had to determine how his abilities and those of others could be made most serviceable to our country. From the period of the Union, lawyers of much higher professional standing than Mr. Sandfield Macdonald had accepted offices unconnected with their profession. The Hon. R. B. Sullivan and the Hon. J. A. Macdonald had previously filled such offices, and many similar cases have occurred in later times. I had a grave responsibility, and I offered Mr. Sandfield Macdonald a seat in the Cabinet next to Mr. Morris, to whom, as my only remaining colleague, I first applied. The office I proposed was the Commissionership of Crown Lands, which, in view of circumstances, I conceived was the office in which Mr. Macdonald could be most useful. Mr. Macdonald, in the exercise of his own judgment, said that he would have the Attorney-Generalship or nothing, and I was very reluctantly compelled to form my Government without him. That he was offended is certain, and that his subsequent election to the Speakership did not remove the sense of injury from his mind is likewise certain. There is no use now in discussing such matters. My object has been to place on record the fact that, being called on to form an Administration, I offered Mr. Sandfield Macdonald an important department, with precedence over all the new members of the Administration. I acted in strict accordance with precedent. The fact that Mr. Macdonald had been Solicitor-General under another Administration was no ground whatever for my selecting him as Attorney-General in mine."

Canadian influence. These letters were written by Mr. Brown himself, and bore his own signature. The first of them was published in the *Globe* of the 11th of September, and the remainder appeared at intervals during the next few weeks. They were then collected and republished as a pamphlet, which was used as a campaign document during the ensuing election contest. The influence of the *Globe* was exerted to the utmost to secure the defeat of the new Ministers and their supporters. The opposition then set on foot by Mr. Brown was persisted in by him so long as the Hincks-Morin Administration remained in power. That his opposition should be more or less injurious to Mr. Hincks was inevitable, for the circulation and influence of the *Globe* were widespread; but its immediate effects were not very perceptible, and some time elapsed before it had the effect of either modifying or retarding the prosecution of the Government policy. Mr. Brown, on the other hand, incurred a serious responsibility as a party man by creating further disruption among the Reformers, who were already suffering from a want of concord among their leaders. So far as can now be ascertained, however, his motives were public and not personal. He was animated by a dislike of the French Canadian policy and institutions, and he had no confidence in the liberal professions of Mr. Hincks, whom he regarded as a man of expediency rather than of principle. An absurd allegation has time and again been repeated to the effect that his antagonism was due to his not being taken into the Ministry, and Mr. Hincks has been accused of want of judgment in forming his Cabinet without Mr. Brown. Who the originator of this extraordinary accusation may have been it is not easy to say; but assuredly it was some one not very familiar with the state of political affairs in Canada during the period under consideration. There were two remarkably good reasons for not asking Mr. Brown to join the Government. In the first place, it was well known that, owing to his

opinions on various questions relating to Lower Canada, he would not accept a seat in it. This reason, of itself, would seem to be conclusive. But there was another equally so. Mr. Brown's sentiments towards the French Canadians, and his stand on the Roman Catholic question, were matters of notoriety. His antipathy was fully returned. It was essential that Lower Canada should be fully represented in the Government by French Canadian members enjoying the confidence of the French Canadian electors. But no French Canadian member of the Assembly would have sat in the same Cabinet with Mr. Brown, and if any one of them had consented to do so he would have been execrated by public opinion in his section of the Province. Under such circumstances, how was it possible for Mr. Hincks to offer Mr. Brown a place in the Government, even if the latter had been desirous of accepting it? The alliance with the French Canadian Liberals was regarded by the Upper Canada Ministers as too valuable to be severed, even though such severance should secure for the latter the coöperation of Mr. Brown.

On the 6th of November the existing Parliament was dissolved. Writs were issued, and during the remainder of the year the country was in the throes of a general election. The result was the return of a considerable majority of supporters of the new Ministry. As regards the Ministers themselves, three—Messieurs Caron, Taché and Morris—were members of the Legislative Council. The other seven were all returned by considerable majorities. Mr. Hincks had a double return, being elected both for the County of Oxford and Niagara Town. He eventually decided to sit for Oxford. Messieurs Drummond and Richards were respectively returned for Shefford and Leeds, the constituencies represented by them in the preceding Parliament. Mr. Morin was returned for Terrebonne, Mr. Young for Montreal City, Mr. Cameron for Huron, and Dr. Rolph for Norfolk. As regards the two Solicitors-General,

Mr. Ross was a Legislative Councillor, and Mr. Chauveau was returned for his old constituency of Quebec County. Most of the distinguished men who had sat in the last Parliament were reëlected, but among the exceptions were Mr. Baldwin (whose defeat in North York has already been recorded), Mr. Price, Mr. Notman, Mr. Cayley, Mr. J. H. Cameron and the two Sherwoods. Mr. Price, contrary to general expectation, recanted his determination to withdraw from public life, and offered himself for reëlection in South York. His candidature was unsuccessful, his opponent, Mr. John W. Gamble being returned in his stead. With this defeat, Mr. Price's active political career ended.* The ranks of the Conservative Opposition in the Upper Province were greatly thinned, and of those returned as Tories few belonged to the extreme school.† The only distinguished ultra-Tory who found a seat was Sir Allan MacNab, who was reëlected for Hamilton, and it was noticeable that even he professed more liberal opinions during the campaign than had ever before been heard from his lips. Mr. (John A.) Macdonald was reëlected for Kingston, but that gentleman had already more than once displayed his impatience at the retrograde policy of his somewhile leaders, and could no longer be regarded as holding precisely the same political opinions. In the Lower Province the tendency, as proved by the result of the elections, was rather the reverse of that in Upper Canada, and was in the direction of Conservatism. Several of the most conspicuous *Rouges* were defeated by candidates of more moderate opinions. Even Mr. Papineau himself sustained defeat in the city of Montreal, though he found a seat in the following July as representative of the county of Two Mountains, where a vacancy occurred in consequence of the death of Mr. W. H. Scott.

* A few years later Mr. Price bade adieu to Canada, and repaired to England, whence he had emigrated to this country in 1828. He took up his abode in the neighbourhood of Southampton, where he has ever since resided, and still resides.

† "In fact, such a thing as an out-and-out Tory is hardly to be found in a day's walk. . . Compact Toryism is dead and gone, never to be resuscitated."—*Globe*, December 20th, 1851.

The election as a whole was remarkable for the quantity of new blood it was the means of introducing into the Assembly, nearly half of the successful candidates being altogether new to Parliamentary life. In addition to those already mentioned, the most conspicuous new members were George Brown, returned for the county of Kent; Jean Charles Chapais, for Kamouraska; Ulric Joseph Tessier, for Portneuf; and Louis Victor Sicotte for St. Hyacinthe. Mr. Brown's defeat by Mr. Mackenzie during the previous spring had therefore only postponed by a few months his entry into the Parliamentary arena. As has been intimated, he came out strongly in opposition to the Government. He was from the first a conspicuous figure in the Assembly, where we shall erelong encounter him. Mr. Chapais was at that time a merchant, and a resident of St. Denis. He came out in opposition to Mr. Letellier, the sitting member, who had been the successful candidate for the constituency in the preceding February. On this occasion the same candidates took the field; but the former verdict was reversed, Mr. Chapais being returned at the head of the poll. He has since had a successful political career, and has sat in two different Administrations. He at the present time represents the De la Durantaye Division in the Senate of the Dominion. Mr. Tessier was an advocate, resident at Quebec, of which city he was then mayor. His election for Portneuf in 1851 was the beginning of a political career of considerable distinction. He was independent in his opinions, and recorded his votes with small regard to purely party considerations. He now occupies an honoured position on the judicial bench in his native Province. Mr. Sicotte was also an advocate by profession. He resided, and still resides, at St. Hyacinthe, the county town of his constituency, where he possessed much local influence. In politics he was a Liberal. He was destined to remain many years in public life, and to hold important offices in several Administrations. He is at the present time a Judge of the Superior Court of Quebec.

The policy of the Government did not differ materially from that of the late one, except that it was somewhat more pronounced in its advocacy of reform, and that, as has been seen, it was committed to some questions upon which the previous Administration had been untrammelled. But purely political questions gave place, for a time, to those relating to the development and material progress of the country. Public attention was largely taken up with the various railway projects of the period. Early in January of the new year (1852) Mr. Hincks and two of his colleagues—Messieurs Taché and Young—proceeded to the Maritime Provinces to attend a conference at Halifax on the subject of the proposed intercolonial line of railway. At Fredericton they were joined by the late Hon. Edward Barron Chandler, a member of the New Brunswick Cabinet. The interests of Nova Scotia at the conference were chiefly represented by the late Hon. Joseph Howe. After much discussion an agreement was arrived at that the projected intercolonial line should be built by the three Provinces, and that it should run through the valley of the St. John. Messieurs Hincks, Chandler and Howe were appointed delegates to proceed to England to obtain the consent of the Imperial Government to extend the promised guarantee * to this arrangement. Mr. Hincks and his colleagues returned to Canada well satisfied with the result of their mission. It had been arranged that the three delegates to England should meet at Halifax in the beginning of March, and that they should cross the Atlantic together. In pursuance of this understanding Mr. Hincks repaired to the Nova Scotian capital at the beginning of that month, but upon his arrival there he was informed by Messieurs Chandler and Howe that they would be unable to sail until the lapse of another fortnight. Mr. Hincks nevertheless sailed from Boston on the 4th, and in due course reached

* *Ante*, p. 231.

London. Mr. Chandler kept his promise, and followed a fortnight later, but Mr. Howe again postponed his departure. Temporary ill-health and pressing political business at home probably had something to do with Mr. Howe's course of action, but its chief cause was doubtless to be found in the fact that the people of Nova Scotia did not approve of the line of the contemplated railway as settled at the recent conference. Mr. Howe had only been brought to consent to the route by the valley of the St. John with great reluctance, and upon an undertaking by New Brunswick to assume a portion of Nova Scotia's share of the debt. He seems to have regretted his consent after it had been given. At any rate he made up his mind, after repeated postponements, not to repair to London, and Messieurs Hincks and Chandler were thus left to carry out the negotiations without his assistance.

Upon Mr. Hincks's arrival in England he found that a change of Government had taken place. The Earl of Derby had succeeded Lord John Russell as Premier, and Sir John S. Pakington (afterwards Lord Hampton) had succeeded Earl Grey as Colonial Secretary. With these distinguished persons Mr. Hincks and Mr. Chandler had an interview on the 30th of April. After the situation of affairs had been discussed, it was agreed to postpone the further consideration of the proposed guarantee until Nova Scotia's representative should appear on the scene. It came out very clearly during the interview, however, that the Imperial Government were not favourable to the line by the valley of the St. John. They favoured a military line, such as had been recommended and surveyed several years previously by Major Robinson and Captain Henderson, of the Royal Engineers, and which was almost identical with the line eventually adopted. There is no need for going minutely into details. Mr. Howe, as has been seen, did not appear, and Messieurs Hincks and Chandler felt that they had been treated cavalierly. After an irritating delay it was found that the Imperial guarantee

would not be extended to the route by the valley of the St. John, the only basis upon which the delegates were empowered to treat. The negotiations with the Government came to nothing, and the Provinces were left to the alternative of either building the road without Imperial aid or abandoning the project altogether. Now, Canada was much more vitally interested in the construction of the trunk line westward from Montreal than in the intercolonial one. Mr. Hincks accordingly, without waiting for a formal refusal on the part of the Imperial Ministry, entered upon arrangements with a number of wealthy English capitalists, who agreed to form a syndicate, and to build the desired line of road. The entire capital was to be raised in England, Canada guaranteeing half the cost, to be secured by a first mortgage on the road. The further particulars of the agreement belong rather to a history of the enterprise itself than to a history of Canada. Suffice it to say that the outcome of the negotiations was the Grand Trunk Railway. Owing to the Crimean war and other unforeseen events, the cost of construction was very much greater than had been anticipated, and the road had to contend against keen competition, as well as various other disadvantages. For these reasons the enterprise has not been a financial success. The chief sufferers, however, have been English capitalists,* and Canada has derived inestimable advantages for her guarantee through the development of her territory, the facilities afforded for transport and travel, and the increased value of property.

Another important subject engaged Mr. Hincks's attention during his absence in England. Reference has been made to the circum-

* "It is important to note that if Canada did not construct her Trunk Railway without involving Englishmen (and women) in ruin, it was because Englishmen would have it so. Moreover, the demand came from such a quarter, that to those familiar with the resources of these 'operators,' it might have been extremely difficult for her to have gone into the money market on her own account, against their opposition."—*Eighty Years' Progress of British North America*, p. 199, *note*. The latter sentence above quoted is irrefragable in point of fact, though the grammar is susceptible of improvement.

stances under which Lord John Russell's Ministry had seen fit to postpone the introduction of a Bill for the repeal of the Imperial Act of 1840 relating to the Clergy Reserves in Canada. That Ministry had now been supplanted by one of a very different political complexion, and there was good reason for apprehending that the project of repealing the Imperial Act would either be indefinitely delayed or altogether abandoned. Soon after the news of the change of Government reached Canada, a meeting of a Committee of the Executive Council was held, at which it was resolved that pressure of some kind should be brought to bear upon the new Ministry with reference to this vital question. After full deliberation a motion was passed recommending that "the Inspector-General, while in England, be requested to seek an interview with Her Majesty's Ministers, and represent to them the importance of carrying out the pledges of their predecessors on the subject of the Clergy Reserves, and thus empowering the Colonial Legislature to deal with the question in accordance with the well-understood wishes of the people of Canada." An extract from the report of the committee, embodying this recommendation, was duly forwarded to Mr. Hincks, who, immediately upon receipt of it, forwarded a copy to the Colonial Secretary, accompanied by a letter from himself strongly pressing the subject-matter upon the attention of Her Majesty's Government.* It was soon evident that the solicitude of the

* "I have learned through the medium of the public journals," wrote Mr. Hincks to Sir John Pakington, under date of May 3rd, "that Her Majesty's Government has determined to take no action in the question of the Clergy Reserves during the present session of Parliament. . . . I can assure Her Majesty's Government . . that there will be no end to agitation in Canada if the attempt be made to settle this question permanently according to the public opinion of England, instead of that of the Province itself; and I may add that it is well known that many who are opponents of the secularization of the Clergy Reserves are on constitutional grounds in favour of a settlement by the Provincial Parliament. I believe that after the assurance given by the late Government it will be found impossible to protract very long the repeal of the Imperial Act; and I have no hesitation in affirming that no interests will suffer more by delay than those of the Church of England."—See *Religious Endowments in Canada, a Chapter of Canadian History*, pp. 76, 77.

Canadian Executive on the subject was not groundless, for on the 22nd of April—nearly a fortnight before their recommendation reached Mr. Hincks in England—the Colonial Secretary had forwarded to Lord Elgin a despatch in which his Excellency was informed that "Her Majesty's present advisers" did not propose to introduce any measure during the current session empowering the Canadian Legislature to alter the existing arrangement with regard to the Clergy Reserves. One of the reasons assigned for this determination was that a general election had only just taken place in Canada, and that it was as yet uncertain what view the new Assembly might take on the question. This suggestion was probably derived from some of the numerous petitions which had been forwarded from Canada to the Imperial Parliament by Dr. Strachan and other opponents of secularization.* The tone of the entire despatch, however, showed plainly enough that the Imperial Government would not easily be brought to consent to a repeal of the Act of 1840. "Her Majesty's Government," wrote the Secretary, "feel serious doubts how far they would be able to give their consent and support to an arrangement, the result of which would too probably be the diversion to other purposes of the only public fund, except that devoted to the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church, which now exists for the support of divine worship and religious instruction in the colony."† It was further intimated that Her Majesty's Government would be willing to entertain a proposal for reconsidering the mode of distributing the income arising from the Clergy Reserves. When Mr. Hincks wrote to the Colonial

* "While, however, I admit the respectability of the petitioners, I think I am justified in affirming that they do not represent anything like a majority of the population of Canada; indeed, the very fact that they on all occasions endeavour to accomplish their wishes by appealing, not to their own representatives in Parliament, but to the Imperial Parliament, is conclusive proof that they are themselves conscious that their views are not in accordance with public opinion in Canada."—See Letter of Mr. Hincks to Sir J. S. Pakington, dated May 10th, 1852, quoted in *Religious Endowments in Canada*, pp. 78--83.

† *Ib.* p. 75.

Secretary as abovementioned, he was unaware of the existence of this despatch, but a copy of it was forwarded to him from the Colonial Office immediately upon receipt of his letter. After reading the despatch, Mr. Hincks wrote a long and urgent letter to the Secretary, in which the state of public opinion in Canada was set forth with unmistakable clearness. The writer expressed "serious alarm" at the tone adopted, and did not hesitate to declare his opinion as to how it would be regarded by a majority of the Canadian population. He deplored the prospect of collision between the Imperial Government and the Canadian Parliament on a question regarding which such strong feelings prevailed. "The people of Canada," wrote Mr. Hincks, "are convinced that they are better judges than any parties in England can be of what measures will best conduce to the peace and welfare of the Province." With respect to the intimation that the Imperial Government would be willing to reconsider the method of distributing the income from the Reserves, the Inspector-General spoke with remarkable frankness. "I have no hesitation," said he, "in stating it as my conviction that the Canadian Parliament will not invite the legislation of the Imperial Parliament regarding the distribution of a local fund. Any such proposition would be received as one for the violation of the most sacred constitutional rights of the people." The foregoing statements and extracts ought effectually to dispose of the oft-repeated story that the Hincks-Morin Administration—at any rate up to the period at which the narrative has arrived—had manifested any disposition to shirk dealing with the Clergy Reserves question. Mr. Hincks's representations to the Colonial Secretary, however, were for the time inoperative. Even had the Government been converted by his reasoning, and disposed to act upon his suggestions—both of which are rather extravagant suppositions—the session of the Imperial Parliament was too far advanced to admit of the introduction of a Bill. The receipt of Mr. Hincks's appeal was duly

acknowledged, and the correspondence came to a close. It was a foregone conclusion that the question should come before the Provincial Parliament at the next session.

During his stay in London Mr. Hincks took a step towards the settlement of the vexed question respecting the Upper Canadian rectories. He directed a case to be prepared for the opinion of two of the most eminent counsel at the equity bar as to the validity of the patents granted, as already mentioned, by Sir John Colborne in 1836.* The opinion pronounced was that the acts done by Sir John for the endowment of the rectories in question were beyond his authority; that they were not sustainable by the instructions given to any preceding Governor; and that they were therefore inoperative and void. It was suggested that the question should be brought before the Canadian Courts in the form of an information to be filed by the Attorney-General. The subsequent history of the matter may as well be here disposed of. The course suggested was adopted, and a Bill was filed by the Attorney-General in the Court of Chancery for Upper Canada, at the instance of the Legislative Assembly, on the 25th of August, 1852, for the purpose of testing the validity of "certain letters patent granted by Sir John Colborne, bearing date the 15th of January, 1836, and purporting to constitute a rectory within the township of York, to be known as the rectory of St. James, and to set apart eight hundred acres of the Clergy Reserve lands as an endowment for said rectory, to be held and enjoyed forever as appurtenant thereto." Considerable delay occurred before the case came on for hearing, and it was not finally disposed of until 1856, when the Court, after hearing able arguments by eminent counsel, decided that Sir John Colborne had full authority to create and endow rectories, and the validity of the patents granted by him was fully affirmed. The decision of the three

* *Ante*, p. 199.

judges* of the Court was unanimous, and the rectory question was thus finally set at rest.

The Inspector-General returned to Canada during the early summer of 1852, and thenceforward until the opening of the session the Government were busy preparing measures for submission to Parliament.

On the 19th of August the first session of the Fourth Parliament met at Quebec. Upon motion of Mr. Hincks, seconded by Mr. Morin, Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald was elected Speaker of the Assembly by a vote of 55 to 23. The Speech from the Throne was delivered on the 20th. It alluded to the steady rise in value of Provincial securities, and to the satisfactory evidence furnished by the recent census as to the the advancement of the colony in wealth and population. Reference was also made to the railway projects of the time; to a contemplated measure for introducing the decimal system into the Provincial currency; to the importance of establishing steam communication between Great Britain and Canadian ports; and to the proposed addition to the representation. The Colonial Secretary's despatch, stating the grounds upon which the Imperial Government had refrained from introducing a bill authorizing the Canadian Legislature to deal with the Clergy Reserves, was also referred to; and it was announced that the subject of the Seigniorial Tenure would probably engage the attention of Parliament during the session. The Conservatives offered no factious opposition, and for a time it seemed as though the Address in Reply would pass with very little debate. Messieurs Hincks and Morin gave the Assembly some account of the formation of their Government, and outlined the ministerial policy that had been determined upon, which, as has been seen, was one of

* See *The Attorney-General* vs. *Grasett*, 5 Grant's U. C. Chancery Reports, 412. It will be noted that this decision was adverse to the opinion pronounced by the eminent English counsel referred to in the text. It is to be presumed that the latter, at the time of pronouncing their opinion, had not all the facts before them.

advanced reform. Then it became apparent that the Government would have to encounter a vigorous opposition from some Liberal members. The most pronounced attack was made by Mr. George Brown, who, in a speech of more than two hours' duration, gave a foretaste of the vigorous, slashing style of Parliamentary oratory for which he afterwards became famous. He complained of the want of satisfactory explanations on the part of Ministers as to the principles and intentions of the Administration, and drew a sketch of the position of parties since the Union, showing the difficulties that had arisen in the Reform ranks, and the rise of an ultra party. He read extracts from the journals and public documents illustrative of the opposing views of the two sections, and proving that at the commencement of 1851 they had been utterly opposed to each other on every great question before the country. He denied that the country had gained anything by the coalition. After assailing the ministerial policy on the railway and other questions, he announced that in spite of these things he should vote for the Address. To vote against it, he remarked, would be to manifest a desire to see the Ministry out of office, and for that he was not yet prepared. Until their measures were fully developed, he could not determine whether it would be the least evil to have them or the Tories in power. He certainly did think it would be better to have a Tory Government than one with a Reform name carrying Tory measures. He concluded by passing a warm eulogium on the constitutional course which his Excellency had pursued in Canada. Such was the tenor of Mr. Brown's first conspicuous Parliamentary utterance. It was essentially the speech of an agitator, whose main strength lies in opposition; and the speaker was thenceforward one of the most marked men in the Assembly.*

* A correspondent of *The British Colonist* (Toronto), writing from the seat of Government under date of August 28th, thus characterizes this maiden Parliamentary effort: "Mr. George Brown made his first set speech last night. He spoke for about two hours, and made a terrible onslaught upon the Government. He produced a sensation in the House,

Mr. Papineau also attacked the Ministry and the existing constitutional system with great bitterness. He declared himself in favour of annexation, an elective Legislative Council, and vote by ballot. Beyond all comparison the most able speech from the Conservative side was made by Mr. John A. Macdonald, who expressed his dissatisfaction at the insufficiency of the ministerial explanations, and declared his conviction that there was no principle in common among the members of the Administration, except the desire to hold office.

The Address finally passed on the 31st, most of the paragraphs being unanimously assented to, and the remainder being adopted by varying but considerable majorities. For more than two months thereafter the business of the session was carried on with energy and vigour, and some enactments of importance were added to the statute book. Conspicuous among the latter were an Act authorizing the Governor to establish a Bureau and Minister of Agriculture; an Act for the establishment of a Transatlantic line of steam vessels; an Act to incorporate the Grand Trunk Railway; and an Act to establish a Consolidated Municipal Loan Fund for Upper Canada. The first-named measure defined the duties of the Minister of Agriculture, which included the encouragement of immigration, and the establishment of model farms with a view to the promotion of agriculture, and the collecting, disseminating and publishing of statistics relating to agricultural matters generally throughout the Province. By the Act relating to Transatlantic steamers, which had been hinted at in the opening Speech, the sum of £19,000 sterling per annum was appropriated for the purpose of establishing a line of

and consternation upon the Treasury benches. He has succeeded in making himself the common topic of conversation in this city to-day; and he bids fair to take the wind out of the sails of his old friend Mr. Hincks. His manner was certainly very far from being elegant or graceful, and of his language the same remark might be made; but he had industriously collected a number of telling facts against the Ministry, and he fired them off one after another, incessantly, for two hours, with telling force."

steam vessels between Canada and Great Britain, to run once every fortnight each way between Liverpool and Quebec and Montreal during such time in each year as navigation should be open in the St. Lawrence, and to run once every month each way between Liverpool and Halifax or Portland during the rest of the year.* The session was very prolific of railway legislation, and the Grand Trunk was only one of many companies which received charters of incorporation. The Municipal Loan Fund Act was a measure enabling municipalities to borrow money on the credit of the Province for local improvements. It assisted materially in the development of the country, but it was taken undue advantage of by some municipalities, and led to a good deal of extravagant outlay.†

A conspicuous incident of the early part of the session was the introduction into the Assembly by Mr. Hincks, on the 14th of September, of a series of resolutions on the subject of the Clergy Reserves. These resolutions, while expressing devoted attachment to Her Majesty's person and Government, claimed that the question was one "so exclusively affecting the people of Canada that its decision ought not to be withdrawn from the Provincial Legislature."‡ The widespread dissatisfaction which must ensue from the refusal of the Imperial Parliament to comply with the just demand of the Canadians was referred to, and a hope was expressed

* The contract for establishing the line was obtained by Messrs. McKean, McLarty & Co., of Liverpool, and the steamers began to run during the following spring. Two years later the contract was annulled, and an arrangement was made with the firm of Messrs. Edmonstone, Allan & Co., of Montreal. The small fleet of the last-named company has since developed into the well-known Allan line of Transatlantic steamships.

† "It will thus be seen that the legislation of the session of 1852 laid the foundation of a large addition to the liabilities of this country, and paved the way for the annual deficit which subsequently existed in the Provincial revenue for so many years."—MacMullen's *History of Canada*, p. 519.

‡ These are the *ipsissima verba* of Earl Grey's despatch to Lord Elgin of the 7th of January, 1851. See *ante*, p. 216. The case could not well have been admitted more clearly on behalf of the Imperial Government.

that Her Majesty's Ministers would consent to give effect to the promise made by their predecessors. The debate on these resolutions lasted four days, and was participated in by nearly every leading member of the House. Mr. Brown made a long and vigorous speech on the subject, in which he attacked the Ministry because, although they had tried to obtain power to deal with the subject, they had not committed themselves to any definite policy in the event of such power being committed to their hands by the Imperial Parliament. Before the debate closed, Mr. Morin pledged himself unequivocally to secularization. Mr. Hincks had already done so, and there could no longer be any doubt that the Ministry were formally committed to that step. The resolutions passed by a majority of 54 to 22. An Address to the Queen founded upon them was prepared and forwarded across the Atlantic, which circumstance marks another step towards the solution of the great problem.

On the 23rd of October three additions were made to the Legislative Council, in the persons of Narcisse Fortunat Belleau, Charles Wilson (Mayor of Montreal), and Louis Panet. Mr. Belleau had a long and dignified public career before him, and we shall meet him more than once in the subsequent course of the narrative. He was a member of the Lower Canadian bar, and resided at Quebec, where he had long been active in the City Council and identified with various public enterprises.

By the beginning of November it had come to be known that there was to be an adjournment of the session for several months, and on the 10th the adjournment actually took place. The Acts passed during this first part of the session received the royal assent at the same date, and the Bureau of Agriculture having thus become an established fact, Mr. Cameron was duly installed as the head of that department. It may here be mentioned that from that date down to the 20th of March, 1862, the Presidents of the Executive Council were *ex-officio* Ministers of Agriculture.

The principal reason assigned for the adjournment was the existence of cholera in Quebec. That this may really have had something to do with the matter is probable enough, but the fact was that the Government had had so many matters of detail on their hands that they were not ready with some important measures which it was essential that they should submit to the House, and they were desirous of gaining time. The resignation of Mr. Young, moreover, which took place on the 20th of September, caused some temporary embarrassment to the Government. Mr. Young's demission of office was due to the ministerial determination to impose differential duties against United States vessels using the Canadian canals. Mr. Young, as we have seen,* was an out-and-out free-trader, and could not reconcile his mind to remaining in a Cabinet which sanctioned a commercial policy with which he had no sympathy. He also objected to Mr. Hincks's scheme of constructing the Grand Trunk Railway by means of a private company. Mr. Young was a man of undoubted ability, as well as of unquestioned integrity, though he had certain visionary crotchets which interfered to some extent with his usefulness as a Cabinet Minister. Upon his resignation his portfolio of Commissioner of Public Works was offered to Mr. George E. Cartier, who, however, did not think proper to accept it. It was then offered to and accepted by Mr. Chabot, who had held the same portfolio in the preceding Administration. It may be added that the ministerial proposal to establish the differential duties proved so unpopular throughout the country that it was abandoned.

The adjournment was until the 14th of February, 1853. An intervening event to which it is necessary to refer was the accession to power of a new Ministry in England during the month of December. At the end of an important budget debate, which was prolonged through four sittings of the House, the Ministry were

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* *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 215, 216.

left in a minority of nineteen. This event was followed by their resignation, and by the formation of a Coalition Ministry, with the Earl of Aberdeen as Premier and the Duke of Newcastle as Colonial Secretary. One of the last official acts of the ex-Secretary, Sir John Pakington, was the preparation of a draft despatch to Lord Elgin, in reference to the Address which had been forwarded to the Queen from the Canadian Assembly, as above mentioned. Owing to Sir John's demission of office the despatch was never forwarded, but it was at his own request laid before Parliament. Having thus obtained publicity, its contents were erelong known in Canada. It was to the effect that Her Majesty's Government felt themselves unable to comply with the wish of the Assembly by committing the Reserves to their charge. All intention of violating the constitutional rights of the Canadian Parliament was explicitly disclaimed, but an opinion was expressed that the repeal of the Imperial Act involved interests which excepted it from the general rule.* This was discouraging enough, and a few excitable persons would doubtless erelong have begun to inveigh against the "baneful domination" to which the colony was subjected by the mother country. Fortunately, however, the same mail which brought the contents of the draft despatch across the Atlantic brought intelligence of the change of Government. Yet a few weeks, and it became known in Canada that the new Ministry had determined to reverse the policy of their predecessors on the Clergy Reserves question, and to recommend the passing of an Act authorizing the Provincial Legislature to deal with it, subject to the preservation of existing interests. A despatch announcing this decision

* The Imperial Government would in any case have been compelled to face this question early in 1853. On the 3rd of December, 1852, Sir William Molesworth gave notice that immediately after the Christmas recess he would move for leave to bring in a Bill to enable the Canadian Legislature to deal with the Clergy Reserves. The change of Government, and the different policy pursued by the incoming one, rendered it unnecessary for Sir William to proceed with his motion.

was forwarded to Lord Elgin by the new Colonial Secretary on the 15th of January, 1853. It was first made public when Parliament reassembled in February. When the news became known throughout the Province there was much jubilation on the part of a great majority of the Upper Canadians, accompanied by a corresponding amount of chagrin on the part of those favourable to preserving the then-existing state of things.

The last address which had been passed by the Canadian Assembly and forwarded to England was, as has been seen, conceived in a very urgent tone, and could scarcely fail to produce some effect there. The resolution at which the new Imperial Ministry had arrived was doubtless largely due to it. The Canadian Opposition, however, were not disposed to give Mr. Hincks's Government any credit on this score. Mr. Brown's opposition was especially vigilant and unceasing, and with such a formidable engine at his back as *The Globe* had by this time become, he was able to cause the Government much uneasiness, and even frequent discomfiture. The reasons why Mr. Brown originally went into opposition have already been referred to.* A not uncommon opinion prevails in Canada to the present day that he was also animated by personal enmity towards Mr. Hincks. The present writer has not been able to discover any traces of such enmity, nor does he believe that it ever existed. There was unquestionably a very pronounced antagonism between Mr. Brown and Mr. Hincks during the whole period of the latter gentleman's tenure of office as Premier, but it seems to have been one of circumstance rather than of temperament, and to have been exercised on public grounds alone. Mr. Brown was vehemently opposed to every measure of concession to Roman Catholics. The existing Administration was largely made up of Roman Catholic members, and those members who were Protestants were remarkably tolerant in their opinions, and disposed to a policy of concilia-

* *Ante*, p. 234.

tion. An Administration so constituted could not hope to receive much favour at the hands of Mr. Brown. It is certain, however, that that gentleman's antagonism grew by what it fed upon, and that it became steadily intensified so long as Mr. Hincks remained in office. Mr. Brown's opposition, indeed, was the prime factor which was destined to bring about the defeat of the Government.* During the recess intervening between the two divisions of the session of 1852-'53, he appeared at public gatherings in various parts of Upper Canada, and inveighed against the existing *régime* with all the vigorous eloquence at his command.

Parliament reassembled, pursuant to adjournment, on the 14th of February (1853). There was no parade or other display at the opening, it being merely a reassembling of an adjourned session, and not a new one. The Duke of Newcastle's despatch was formally announced to and laid before the Assembly on the day following. The members, as usual in such cases, stood up in their places while the reading was proceeded with, and at the close there were long and emphatic demonstrations of applause. In spite of the efforts of the Opposition to make little of the circumstance, there was a general feeling throughout the land that the Government were entitled to credit for the result of Mr. Hincks's resolutions of the preceding September. The ensuing part of the session extended over four months. It was fruitful of an altogether exceptional

* Mr. Hincks, addressing the Assembly on the 8th of September, 1854, practically admitted this fact. "The Administration," said he, "was opposed at the outset by the honourable member for Lambton"—Mr. Brown—"and in adverting to him I must do him the justice to say that there is one thing I like about him, and it is that he has always been straightforward in his opposition. There is no misunderstanding *him*, at all events. He took his course; he was determined to destroy the Government. I wish not to disparage my opponents. I wish to believe that the course they take is the one which they consider best calculated to promote the interests of the country. I am willing to give the honourable member for Lambton the same credit which I trust he would accord to me. I am willing to believe that he thought he would promote the best interests of the country by obstructing the progress of the Administration. He at all events took that course at the beginning, and has persevered in it ever since."

amount of legislation, including nearly 200 Acts, whereof no fewer than 28 related to railways. The railway mania was at its height, and the wildest schemes were projected, in many cases, apparently, in the utmost good faith. A number of educational institutions also applied for and obtained Acts of incorporation. A measure for regulating the currency was passed, whereby the decimal system was introduced, and the legal denominations and values of current money were ascertained. Another Act extended the franchise, and provided a system of registration of voters. An Act introduced by Mr. Brown abolished the existing penalties for usury. An animated debate ensued upon the introduction by Mr. Drummond of a Government measure relating to the Seigniorial Tenure. It proposed to reduce such of the rents as were held to be exorbitant, and to obtain judicial decisions as to their legality. In the case of such rents as were adjudged to be legal, compensation to the seignior for any excess over two pence per acre was provided for, and two pence was to be the maximum rent for the future. Where the rents were adjudged to be illegal the seignior was to submit to the reduction without compensation. Mr. Christopher Dunkin, an able Montreal lawyer who was destined to become widely known in political life, appeared at the bar of the House, and occupied two entire evenings in presenting the question from the seignior's point of view. His argument displayed great erudition, and was very effectively delivered. He was replied to by Mr. Drummond, and the subject was fully discussed. The measure was finally passed by the Assembly, but rejected in the Legislative Council. The action of the Upper House at this time tended to increase the agitation on the subject of applying the elective principle to that body; an agitation which had been set on foot several years before, and which was now intensified to such an extent that an Address was passed by the Assembly and duly forwarded to England, praying that authority might be given to the Canadian Legislature to deal with the question. The agitation, as will hereafter be seen, was erelong successful.

A measure providing for an increased representation had once more been presented to the Assembly during the first part of the session in the preceding year, but the adjournment had prevented it from being proceeded with. Its consideration was now resumed. Mr. Morin was its sponsor, and upon him chiefly devolved the task of explaining its provisions. There was a vigorous opposition to some of its details on the part of Messrs. George Brown, John A. Macdonald, Sir Allan MacNab, W. L. Mackenzie, and others, but, after having been defeated at three consecutive sessions, it was now conducted through its various stages and passed. Fifty-eight members voted in its favour, the requisite two-thirds vote being fifty-six. It increased the number of representatives from 84 to 130—65 for each section of the Province. This arrangement rendered necessary a new distribution of constituencies, which was duly effected by the Act. All the more important counties were divided for electoral purposes, and additional representation was assigned to the principal cities. In the cases of the towns of Brockville, Niagara and Cornwall, adjoining townships were added to them for electoral purposes. The representation, in a word, was adjusted on a more equitable basis, and extended so as to be more in accordance with the progress which had been made by the colony since the Union. Another good purpose effected by the measure was that it unquestionably tended to prevent undue or corrupt influence being brought to bear upon members, by reducing the value and importance of individual votes.* The Act was conditioned not to go into operation until the end of the Parliament then in being.

The opposition to the Representation Act was chiefly due to the

* "With so small a body as eighty [-four] members, when parties are nearly balanced, individual votes become too precious, which leads to mischief. I have not experienced this evil to any great extent since I have had a Liberal Administration, which has always been strong in the Assembly; but with my first Administration I felt it severely."—Letter of Lord Elgin; see *Walrond*, p. 144.

advocates of the principle of representation by population. The census of 1852 disclosed the fact that Upper Canada had a population of more than 60,000 in excess of that of Lower Canada. It was argued by the Upper Canadian Opposition that Parliamentary representation should be based on population, and that as Upper Canada contained more people than the Lower section of the Province she was entitled to send a greater number of representatives to Parliament. But, prior to the Union, and for nine years thereafter, the population of Lower Canada had been in excess of that of Upper Canada; yet the former section of the Province had been permitted to have only an equal representation, and a Union had been forced upon Lower Canada on those terms. After submitting to such a state of things ever since the Union had been effected, it was scarcely to be supposed that the Lower Canadians would now willingly sanction the giving to Upper Canada of a representation greater than was conceded to themselves. Mr. Brown, by his advocacy of an unequal representation in favour of Upper Canada, still further widened the breach between the Lower Canadians and himself.

The last few weeks of the session were marked by increased activity on the part of the Liberal Opposition in Upper Canada. This activity was due to several causes, one of which was the alleged tergiversation of the Government on the Clergy Reserves question. Towards the end of May news reached Canada that on the 9th of that month the Imperial Clergy Reserves Act had received the royal assent. By its provisions power was given to the Canadian Legislature to vary or repeal all or any part of the Act of 1840, and to make such other provisions for or concerning the sale, alienation or disposal of the Clergy Reserves or the proceeds thereof as to the said Legislature might seem meet. The last clause of the Act prohibited interference with the annual stipends or allowances which had already been assigned to clergymen, during the lives or incumbencies of the persons interested. All restrictions against Provincial

legislation on the subject having thus been removed, it would have been quite practicable for the Government to introduce and carry through a measure for secularization before the adjournment, and Mr. Brown and others of his way of thinking vehemently urged such a proceeding upon them. When it was known that they did not intend to deal with the question during the existing session a suspicion of their good faith began to be entertained, even by many of their supporters. *The Globe,* and such of the Provincial papers as reflected the opinions of that journal,* of course made the most of the situation, and the Government felt the effect of their assaults. The terms upon which Mr. Hincks had let the contract for building the Grand Trunk Railway were also denounced as extravagant and prejudicial to the interests of the country. The numerous grants to sectarian schools and colleges formed still another ground of sweeping denunciation. The combined effect of these various onslaughts was undoubtedly to weaken the Ministry, insomuch that on more than one occasion they were only able to carry their measures by exceedingly narrow majorities.

A few days before the adjournment certain events occurred which the Opposition contrived to turn to such account as to still further prejudice the Government in public estimation. During the spring of 1853 the celebrated Italian patriot Alessandro Gavazzi, an ex-monk of the Order of St. Paul, visited America. He had even at that time acquired a more than European fame by his exertions in the cause of Italian liberty. In England he had been hailed with the enthusiasm justly due to one who has fought and suffered in a righteous cause, and his reputation as an eloquent and impassioned orator had preceded him across the ocean. During a tour in the United States he delivered a succession of powerful lectures, chiefly

* To speak with absolute precision, *The Globe* was not a *journal* at that time. Its daily issue did not begin until Saturday, October 1st, 1853, three months and a half after the session had closed.

devoted to what he regarded as the errors of Romanism. Early in June, 1853, he reached Quebec, and on the evening of the 6th, pursuant to previous announcement, he proceeded to deliver a discourse in the Free Church, in St. Ursule Street, on the subject of the Inquisition. A large audience assembled to hear him. When he had been speaking for somewhat more than an hour he was interrupted by violent and abusive exclamations on the part of a gang of lawless ruffians who had distributed themselves here and there among the audience, and who had doubtless repaired to the lecture for the purpose of assailing the orator of the evening. The interruption was the signal for action on the part of other ruffians outside. A volley of stones came crashing through the windows of the church, and immediately afterwards a crowd of persons armed with bludgeons made a forcible entrance into the building. A scene of wild confusion ensued. The shrieks of terrified women and children sounded in all directions. The intruders pressed forward in spite of such resistance as decorous, law-abiding citizens, hampered by the presence of their wives and daughters, were able to offer, and a number of them reached the pulpit where Father Gavazzi awaited their assault. They had to deal with no craven, but with a brave and resolute enthusiast who had more than once been compelled to take his life in his hand, and to fight for it against overwhelming odds. The mob precipitated themselves up the pulpit stairs with intent to hurl him to the floor. He was a man of large and powerful build, with the courage of a Luther and the thews of a prize-fighter. He faced his assailants with dauntless front, and with eyes flashing like royal jewels. Armed with a stool, he struck right and left with lightning-like rapidity, and with such tremendous effect that sixteen of his assailants bit the dust before him. The contest, however, was too unequal, and after maintaining his position for some minutes he was thrown violently over the ledge of the pulpit on to the heads of those beneath. Regaining his feet, he fought

his way to one of the doors. A division of the military providentially arrived on the scene, and soon all danger was over. Father Gavazzi escaped with a few contusions, but his secretary was so badly beaten that for several days fears were entertained for his life. After leaving the church the mob stationed themselves in front of the Parliament buildings, and roared in stentorian tones for Mr. George Brown, whose championship of Protestantism had made him an object of their hatred. That gentleman happened to be absent from his place in the House on that evening, and did not fall into their clutches. It was necessary to summon additional military assistance before the mob was finally dispersed. The civil authorities were shamefully remiss in dealing with the rioters, and the matter was brought before the Assembly by Mr. Christie on the following day, when an informal discussion took place on the subject.

On Thursday, the 9th, a much more serious affray occurred at Montreal, in consequence of the delivery of a lecture there by Father Gavazzi. The place of delivery was Zion Church, Haymarket Square. In order to guard against a recurrence of a scene similar to that which had been enacted three nights before at Quebec, a strong body of police were stationed opposite the church. Another occupied the middle of the square; and a small body of troops was kept in readiness near by. While the lecture was in progress there was an attempt on the part of a band of Roman Catholic Irish to force their way into the church. In this attempt they would have succeeded in spite of the police but for a number of persons in the audience, who sallied forth and repelled the intruders. A few minutes afterwards the latter returned to the assault, and were again driven back. One of them fired a pistol in his retreat, and was immediately shot down by a Protestant. Several other shots followed, and in the confusion that ensued the lecture was hurriedly brought to a close, and the audience started for their respective homes. During their progress along the streets several shots were

fired at them, and many of them were wounded by stones and other missiles. Two women were struck down and trampled almost to death. A child of nine years of age had its arm broken at the wrist. The streets resounded with the roars of murderous, half-drunken navvies, and the shrieks of terror-stricken women. Mr. Charles Wilson, the mayor of the city, for some unaccountable reason, ordered the troops, who had issued from their place of concealment, to fire upon the crowd. The order was obeyed, and five men fell dead. For a moment it seemed as though the massacre of St. Bartholomew was to be reënacted in the streets of Montreal; but the firing by the troops put an end to aggression on the part of the mob. The dead and wounded were conveyed to their homes. It is impossible even to approximate the number of the wounded, but among them were at least a score of respectable men, women and children, whose only offence was that they had sanctioned, by their presence, a lecture by Father Gavazzi.

Such an occurrence might well create tremendous excitement from one end of Canada to the other. The lawless character of the Montreal mob had never been more signally displayed, even during the excitement consequent on the Rebellion Losses Bill. As for the mayor, the most charitable supposition is that he was so carried away by the excitement of the hour as to lose his head.* But he was a Roman Catholic, and the Protestant population generally were not charitable in judging of his motives. The Upper Canadian Opposition press made the calamity a ground of attack upon the Govern-

* Sir Francis Hincks is of opinion that the troops fired without orders, and he gives his reasons for believing that the mayor was guiltless of the massacre.—See his lecture on "The Political History of Canada," pp. 78, 79. Sir Francis is doubtless sincere in giving expression to such a belief; but a careful perusal of more than a score of contemporary accounts, and of the evidence given at the Inquest, together with repeated conversations with several persons who were present on the unfortunate occasion, have prevented the author from concurring in that view. It is fair, however to record the fact that Mr. Wilson himself, in his evidence before the Coroner's Jury, denied on oath that he had given any order to fire—a statement which was contradicted by several other witnesses.

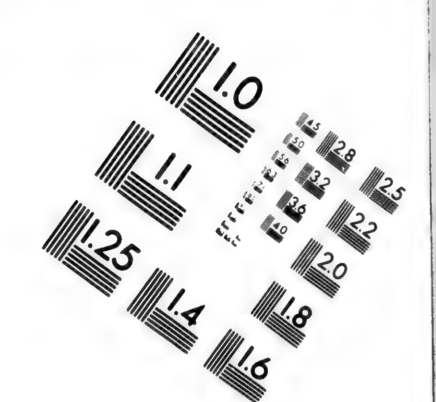
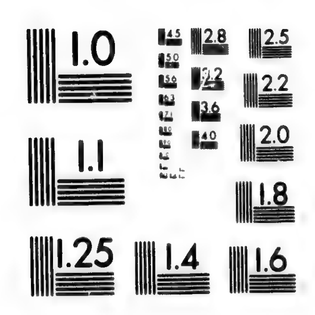
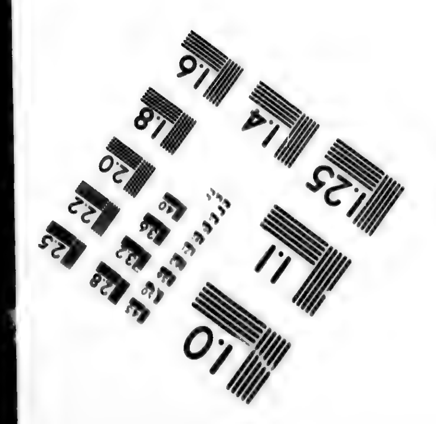
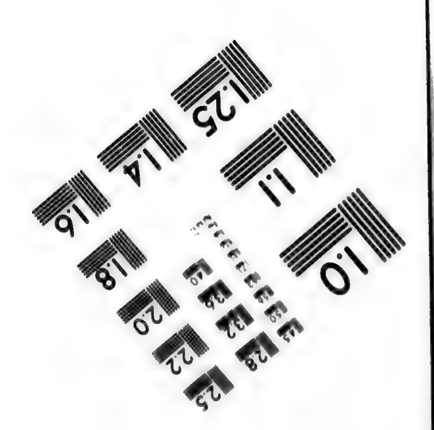
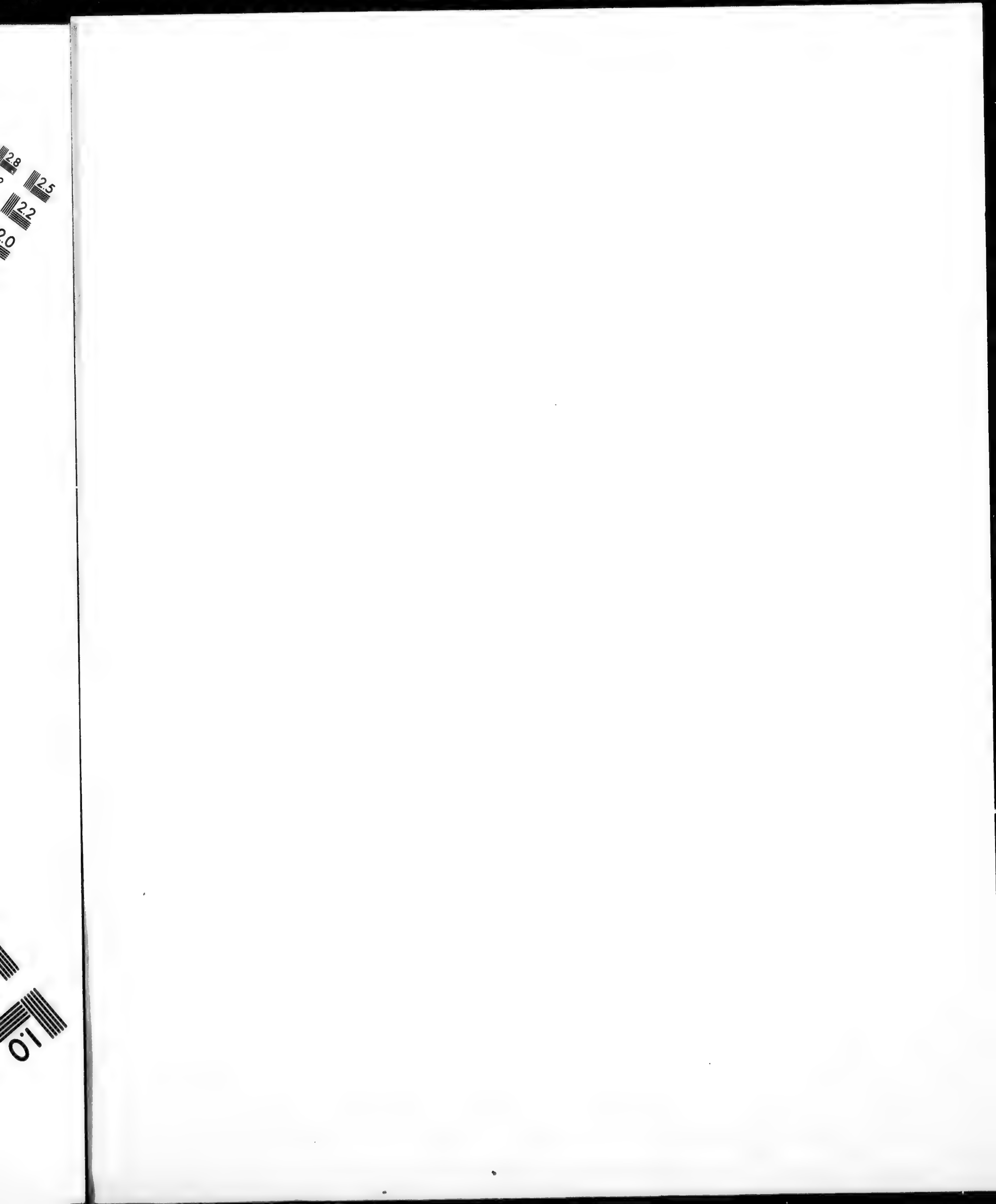


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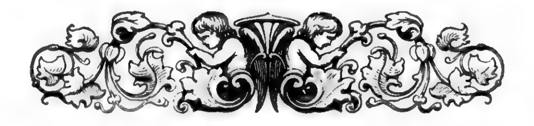
ment, who were charged with cowardice and heartlessness for not ordering an immediate and searching investigation. Mr. Hincks and the mayor of Montreal were both prominent members of the St. Patrick's Society, and the former was charged with being under Roman Catholic influence for political ends. In this way even the Gavazzi riots were made to subserve party purposes. The Government perhaps fairly earned a measure of censure for not immediately setting on foot a rigorous investigation, and subjecting the breakers of the law to adequate punishment.* For bringing Gavazzi to Canada they were of course not responsible, nor can Mr. Hincks with any approach to justice be held personally accountable for the shortcomings of the mayor of Montreal.

Parliament adjourned on the 14th of June. Several ministerial changes occurred in the course of the summer. On the 22nd of June Attorney-General Richards was elevated to the place on the Bench which had become vacant in the previous April through the death of Judge Sullivan. He was succeeded in the Attorney-Generalship by the Hon. John Ross, whose place as Solicitor-General was taken by the Hon. Joseph Curran Morrison. In the middle of August Mr. Caron also accepted a seat on the bench of the Superior Court in his native Province. He was succeeded as Speaker of the Legislative Council by Mr. (James) Morris. The latter's place of Postmaster-General was taken by Mr. Cameron, who was succeeded in the offices of President of the Council and Minister of Agriculture by Dr. Rolph. The Commissionership of Crown Lands was thus left vacant. After being offered to Mr. Sicotte, and refused by that gentleman, it was at the end of August assumed by Mr. Morin, who relinquished the Provincial Secretaryship to Mr. Chauveau. The Solicitor-Generalship for Lower Canada was then filled by the appointment of Mr. Dunbar Ross, who had sat in the Assembly

* An investigation took place some time afterwards by the direction of the Government, but there would seem to have been unnecessary delay, and it was charged that the enquiry was not conducted with that rigour which the circumstances called for.

for Megantic during the last Parliament, but who at this time had no seat in Parliament, nor was he required to find one until the next general election. These numerous changes did not tend to strengthen the Government. Mr. Richards's demission of office was a decided loss, and the transference of some of the other portfolios was not popularly regarded with favour. The combined effect of these various modifications and the persistent attacks to which the Ministry were subjected by the Opposition press was that they were decidedly weaker than they had been at the beginning of the year. The composition of the Government underwent no further change while it remained in existence.





CHAPTER XXXIII.

CURRENTS AND COUNTER-CURRENTS.

"The Clergy Reserve question was one on which it was notorious that the public mind, in Upper Canada more especially, was much divided, and the Imperial statute on the subject had been repealed for the express purpose of facilitating a settlement which would be final, and in accordance with the deliberate views and convictions of the people of the Province. To attempt, therefore, to settle such a question in a Parliament which had been already declared by its own vote to be an imperfect representation of the people, and by the exercise of what might be deemed the influence of the Government, was a course of proceeding obviously open to serious objection."—LORD ELGIN'S *Despatch to the Duke of Newcastle,* June 22nd, 1854.



HILE the ministerial adjustments referred to at the close of the last chapter were in progress, Lord Elgin committed the functions of government to the hands of Lieutenant-General Rowan, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, and set out for England, partly to enjoy a much-needed holiday, and partly to impress upon the Imperial authorities the desirableness of obtaining a treaty of reciprocity with the United States. The latter project was one to the development whereof he had devoted much time, and which he was very desirous of seeing brought to a successful conclusion. Although he was merely absent on leave, there was a general impression throughout the Province that his Excellency would not return to Canada.

As the autumn passed by, several circumstances occurred which tended to the still further embarrassment of the Ministry. A new Commission of the Peace was issued, which gave rise to much hostile criticism with reference to some of the persons included in it. Messieurs Hincks and Drummond were fiercely taken to task by the

Protestant population for alleged attempts on their part to rehabilitate the reputation of the mayor of Montreal, which had suffered grievously among Protestants in consequence of the Gavazzi episode. The Roman Catholic hierarchy in Lower Canada not unnaturally espoused the side of Mr. Wilson, which was in itself an additional reason for his unpopularity with Protestants, as the *odium theologicum* was even more heated than ordinarily during that disturbed time. Mr. Drummond was now Attorney-General for Lower Canada, and he was accused of being unnecessarily dilatory in bringing the rioters to justice. Mr. Hincks also became involved in some unpleasant personal complications. At the trial of a case of *Paterson et al.* vs. *Bowes*, in the Court of Chancery for Upper Canada, at Toronto, in September, certain facts were elicited which went to show that the Inspector-General, while holding office as First Minister of the Crown, had joined the mayor of Toronto in the purchase of municipal debentures of that city at a discount of twenty per cent. It also appeared that a Bill had afterwards been passed through Parliament whereby the value of the debentures had been raised to par. As thus tersely stated, the transaction certainly had a suspicious and unpleasant aspect. A little amplification gave it a somewhat less questionable complexion. The facts, briefly stated, were as follow. The city of Toronto had agreed to take stock in the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway Company to the extent of $200,000. The company had made a contract for the building of the road, and the contractor had agreed to take the debentures in payment.* The debentures were for sale on the Toronto stock market for months, the current price being about eighty cents on the dollar. Mr. Bowes, mayor of Toronto, proposed to Mr. Hincks to join him in buying up the debentures. Mr. Hincks responded favourably, and the proposal was carried out. The Act of Parliament after-

* The County of Simcoe took a similar amount of stock, and paid for it in the same way.

wards obtained was a mere matter of form. It was unopposed, and was obtained without the necessity of any Parliamentary influence on the part of Mr. Hincks. The object of procuring it was to enable the city of Toronto to provide a moderate sinking fund, and to make the debentures payable in London. The city wished to raise more money for its own purposes, and to exchange new debentures for the old ones. The transaction turned out to be for the benefit of the city, but the Court held that Mr. Bowes, being the mayor of the corporation, must be held as acting in a quasi-fiduciary capacity, and that the city was entitled to his share of the profits. As for Mr. Hincks, there was no ground for instituting any legal proceedings against him, nor were any such instituted, but there was a very general opinion that, considering the position which he occupied, it would have been better if he had had no pecuniary connection with the transaction.

Another charge brought against the Inspector-General was the purchase of certain Government lands with a view to speculation. Investigation revealed the fact that Government had acquired from a defaulting officer a considerable farm near Point Levi, opposite Quebec. It was sold by public auction in several lots. One of the lots was bought by a syndicate of which Mr. Hincks was a member. No Government influence was brought to bear, nor did any necessity for such influence arise. The bargain finally turned out an unprofitable one—a fact, however, which did not in the least affect the propriety or impropriety of the transaction. Mr. Hincks, by virtue of his public office, was a trustee for the Province, and had voluntarily placed himself in a dubious position. He was subsequently acquitted by Parliamentary Committees of any corrupt design in respect of both the abovementioned transactions; but in the latter, as in the former case, there was a very general feeling of regret that a Cabinet Minister should not have shunned the very appearance of impropriety in such matters. These disclosures fur-

nished another source of unpopularity for the Ministry of which he was the head, and another basis for attack on the part of the Opposition, who undoubtedly made a much louder outcry than the circumstances legitimately called for.

Provincial railway projects were pushed forward during the year at a rapid rate. In June the Grand Trunk was opened to Portland, an event which was celebrated by a costly banquet at Montreal. The Great Western was opened from Suspension Bridge westward to London at the close of the year, and within a month afterwards it was completed through to Windsor. The Ontario, Simcoe and Huron—now called the Northern—was completed from Toronto to Bradford in June, and thence to Barrie in October. In the Lower Province there was also considerable development in the same direction. The breaking out of the Crimean war caused a brisk demand for grain at high prices, and Canadian farmers throve apace. Business of all kinds continued active, and it was fondly believed by persons ignorant of political economy that the era of prosperity would know no end. The Governor-General, meanwhile, was not losing his time in the mother country. By his letters to, and conferences with, distinguished persons in various parts of the kingdom, as well as by his eloquent speeches at several sumptuous banquets given in his honour, he rendered great services to Canada, by making known the vast resources of the country, and the splendid field which it afforded for immigration. He remained in England until the spring of 1854, having in the interim been specially empowered by the Imperial Government to negotiate a treaty of reciprocity with the United States. Early in the year last named Mr. Hincks also proceeded to England on important public business connected with the Grand Trunk Railway and the Provincial finances. It was not till May that the Governor and the Premier left for Washington, whither they proceeded to settle the terms of the proposed treaty.

Lord Elgin, as has been seen, had long been desirous of bringing

about a treaty of reciprocity with the United States, and had cordially coöperated with his Ministers with that object in view. Mr. Hincks had previously visited Washington as the representative of the Government, and had done his utmost to secure the concurrence of American statesmen in the project. He had, however, been called upon to encounter serious difficulties. The chief obstacle was the American Congress, which could not readily be induced to take up the subject. "In the vast multiplicity of matters with which that Assembly has to deal," says Lord Elgin's biographer, "it is said that no cause which does not appeal strongly to a national sentiment, or at least to some party feeling, has a chance of obtaining a hearing, unless it is taken up systematically by 'organizers' outside the House. The Reciprocity Bill was not a measure about which any national or even party feeling could be aroused. It was one which required much study to understand its bearings, and which would affect different interests in the country in different ways. It stood, therefore, especially in need of the aid of professional organizers; a kind of aid of which it was of course impossible that either the British or the Canadian Government should avail itself. Session after session the Bill was proposed, scarcely debated, and set aside." * Most Canadians had abandoned all expectation of seeing the matter brought to a successful issue, and when the Governor and Mr. Hincks left for Washington there was a general belief throughout the Province that they would have their journey for their pains. It was Lord Elgin's first diplomatic mission. Contrary to prevalent expectation, its object was successfully accomplished. On the 5th of June the treaty was signed by Lord Elgin on behalf of Great Britain, and by the Hon. William L. Marcy, Secretary of State of the United States, on the part of the republic.

By its provisions the people of the United States were autho-

* Walrond, pp. 107, 108.

rized to take fish of any kind, except shell-fish, on the sea-coasts and shores, and in the bays, harbours and creeks of the British Provinces, without being restricted to any distance from the shore. Similar privileges were in turn conferred upon British subjects with respect to the eastern sea-coasts and shores of the United States, north of the 36th parallel of north latitude. Mutual permission was given to the subjects of each to land upon the coasts and shores of the other for the purpose of drying their nets and curing their fish. The third article of the treaty enumerated certain commodities, being the growth and produce of the British colonies or of the United States, which were conditioned to be admitted into each country free of duty. The most important of these were grain, flour and breadstuffs of all kinds, animals, meats, poultry, fish, lumber, hides, ores of metals, rice, hemp, and manufactured tobacco. The fourth article opened the navigation of the St. Lawrence and the Canadian canals to the people of the United States on the same terms as were exacted from British subjects. The latter were in turn endowed with the right to navigate Lake Michigan. It was further agreed that no export or other duty should be levied on timber cut in that portion of the State of Maine watered by the St. John River and its tributaries, and floated down that river to the sea for shipment to the United States from the Province of New Brunswick. The treaty was not to take effect until it had received the sanction of the Imperial and Provincial Parliaments on the one hand, and of the Congress of the United States on the other. It was conditioned to remain in force for ten years from the date at which it should come into operation, and further, until the expiration of twelve months after either of the contracting parties should give notice to the other of a wish to terminate it, each being at liberty to give such notice at the end of the said term of ten years, or at any time afterwards. Practically speaking, the treaty may be said to have been thirteen years in operation; for though it did not legally come into force until March, 1855, and

though it ended early in 1866, the international traffic was adjusted with reference to it immediately after its ratification in 1854, and it was carried on with such energy during the months of its operation in the two years last named as to place them on an equality with others of the intervening eleven. Its effect was to give a decided stimulus to various branches of industry in Canada, and the agricultural community early felt the benefits which it conferred. In the Maritime Provinces it was not popular, the inhabitants alleging that any benefit to them arising from reciprocity was dearly purchased by the fishing privileges conferred upon the people of the United States. Complaint was also made that registration was refused to colonial vessels entering United States ports, whereas the ships of the latter nation were admitted into British American ports upon the same terms as those of the mother country. There were doubtless elements in the treaty which might well have been much more favourable to the British colonies, but a very brief glance at statistics is all that is necessary to satisfy any unbiassed enquirer as to the benefit which Canada derived from it.*

Immediately after the signing of the treaty Lord Elgin and Mr. Hincks returned to Canada, where Parliament had been summoned to meet on the 13th of June.

Much dissatisfaction had been expressed with the Ministry for having delayed the assembling of Parliament until within a single day of the limit allowed by the law,† which enjoined the meeting

* "The grand fact remains that, under the operation of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, the aggregate interchange of commodities between the Republic and the Provinces—to promote which the Treaty was concluded—rose from an annual average of $14,230,763 in the previous eight years, to $33,492,754, gold currency, in the first year of its existence; to $42,942,754, gold currency, in the second year of its existence; to $50,339,770, gold, in its third year; and to no less a sum than $84,070,955 at war prices, in its thirteenth year." —See "Commercial Reciprocity between the United States and the British North American Provinces," a pamphlet prepared at Washington under the auspices of Sir Edward Thornton and the Hon. George Brown, in 1874.

† *I.e.*, the 31st clause of the Union Act, which provided that "There shall be a session of the Legislative Council and Assembly of the Province of Canada once at least every

of Parliament at least once in every twelve months. Various writers, referring to the subject, have accounted for the delay by saying that the Government were conscious of waning influence, and were afraid to meet Parliament. It is difficult to understand what the Government could have expected to gain by delay. They knew that a merciless war was being waged against them by the Opposition in Upper Canada, and it is possible enough that they may have been "conscious of waning influence;" but they well knew that they must meet Parliament sooner or later, and they had nothing to hope from postponing their hour of trial. Moreover, the session could not very well have been held in the absence of both the Governor and the Premier, who were absent, first in England, and afterwards at Washington, and who did not return to Canada from the latter city until just before the actual opening.

A calamity had befallen the Parliament buildings since the last session. Several hours before daylight on the morning of the 1st of February, a fire, communicated from the flues beneath the library, broke out in the south wing, which was appropriated to the use of the Legislative Council. The flames soon spread, and the entire range of buildings was consumed, entailing a loss upon the Province of more than £100,000. Much valuable furniture, a number of excellent paintings, and, worst of all, some of the public records and a great portion of the library, were destroyed. The library, though it had been got together in less than five years—that is to say, since the burning of the Parliament buildings in Montreal in 1849—was of inestimable value, and contained books and documents of which no duplicates were obtainable. In addition to the material loss, the calamity was to be deplored for the associations connected with the time-honoured structure, around which many historic memories

year, so that a period of twelve calendar months shall not intervene between the last sitting . . in one session . . and the first sitting in the next session. The session of the previous year assembled on the 14th of June. *Ante*, p. 278.

clung, and wherein the stormy sessions of the old Parliament of Lower Canada had been held for nearly half a century. An edifice which had been erected for the Sisters of Charity was now temporarily fitted up for the accommodation of the Government. Three months later—on the night of May 3rd—this structure also fell a prey to the flames. The Assembly was finally compelled to meet in the Music Hall, while the Upper House found temporary accommodation in the Court House.

The Government had concluded that it would be unadvisable to proceed to the settlement of the Clergy Reserves and Seigniorial Tenure questions during the session. Such important matters, they argued, ought not to be dealt with by an expiring Parliament. During the last session, as has been seen, an Act had been passed to increase the representation in the Assembly from 84 to 130 members. It had received the sanction of more than two-thirds of the entire membership of both branches of the Legislature. With what propriety, then, it was asked, could the Government proceed to the settlement of such vital questions as the Clergy Reserves and the Seigniorial Tenure in a Parliament which had already proclaimed itself to be an inadequate representation of the people? If the Government thought proper to introduce measures secularizing the Reserves and abolishing or commuting the Tenure, they would probably be able to command a majority in their favour in the existing Parliament; but would not such a proceeding be an abuse of power—an act of intolerable oppression? In view of all the circumstances, it was surely desirable that there should be an express appeal to the people. Such was the ministerial view of the situation—a view which received sanction from British precedent in the case of the Reform Act of 1832—and the Governor-General entirely concurred in it.

The determination of the Government to postpone legislation on the two most prominent questions of the day had been informally

announced towards the close of 1853. As might have been expected, the announcement raised a tempest of objurgation on the part of the most extreme section of the Opposition press. Ministers were accused of trifling with public opinion, and of having practised a studied course of deception ever since assuming the reins of power. They had determined, it was said, to make the settlement of those two great questions a stalking-horse at the ensuing elections, and this notwithstanding the fact that they had been returned at the last general election pledged to dispose of the two great standing grievances of the two sections of the Province. The argument about an express appeal to the popular vote was characterized as "the most shallow of political dodges." Public opinion, it was said, had been pronounced upon these questions times without number, before the Union and since.* The wrath of the discontented was boundless. So high ran the dispute, and so strong were the conflicting opinions entertained among the Liberals that a total disruption of that party seemed imminent. While public opinion was thus agitated, the Houses met, as above stated, on the 13th of June, 1854.

* "It is all very well," said the *Globe*, "for Mr. Hincks to talk about submitting the question of the Clergy Reserve to popular vote. No anti-State Churchman in Canada but would rejoice in having the question left to such a mode of decision, *could a fair vote be taken upon it.* But Mr. Hincks and every one else knows well that at the approaching election the question is to be coupled with the whole of the scandalous proceedings of the Ministry for three years—that it is to be made the mere stalking-horse of certain men to certain offices—that it is to be made the cover of broken promises, unsound legislation and railway jobbing. It is perfectly obvious that there are thousands who have always voted for the secularization of the Reserves, and who may have even voted to make Mr. Francis Hincks Premier, who will [illegible] ow vote to continue him in that position at any price. And there is a still larger pa[illegible] in the country who might vote for Mr. Hincks, or for Mr. Anybody else, so that the Clergy Reserves were but certain to be secularized, who will not put the slightest faith in the sincerity of Mr. Hincks and his colleagues, and who will readily understand that the Clergy Reserve cry is merely used in 1854 as it was in 1851: with the same intention now as then, the retention of office: and undoubtedly with the same results—broken promises and open chuckling at the success of the trick! Mr. Hincks cannot gull the Reformers of Upper Canada at a second election with the same decoy-duck—that he may depend on. He must either secularize or *go out.*"—*Semi-Weekly Globe*, Tuesday, December 27th, 1853.

The object in assembling Parliament at this time was merely to pass two or three urgent measures, prior to a dissolution. It was very desirable to pass a Bill without delay giving effect to the Reciprocity Treaty; and it was also considered expedient to amend the Act of the last session extending the elective franchise. In order that sufficient time might be afforded to complete the system of registration of voters imposed by the latter measure, the 1st of January, 1855, had been assigned as the date of its coming into operation. But as it was now settled that a general election should take place before that date, it was desirable that the Act should come into operation in time to admit of its provisions being taken advantage of by persons who would otherwise be debarred from voting at the election. To effect this object express legislation was necessary. The Governor's Speech at the opening suggested the enactment of a law to accomplish the desired end, as well as of a measure to give effect to the Reciprocity Treaty, but it contained no reference of any kind to the Clergy Reserves or the Seigniorial Tenure.

The Ministry, as we have seen, had been steadily losing ground for many months, and it soon became evident that they were in a minority. Four different amendments to the Address in Reply were moved by Messieurs Henry Sherwood,* Cauchon, Sicotte and Langton.† They were condemnatory of the ministerial policy in not summoning Parliament at an earlier date, and in not promptly moving in the matter of the Reserves and Tenure. A sharp debate followed, lasting over several days, during which the Government were subjected to severe strictures. There was a manifest tendency on the part of the various sections of the Upper Canadian Opposition to sink their differences, and to coalesce with a view to the defeat of the Ministry; so that while Mr. Morin's Lower

* Mr. Sherwood had been returned for the City of Toronto at a bye-election in April, 1853.

† Member for Peterborough.

Canadian supporters for the most part stood by him, Mr. Hincks was deserted by many of those upon whom he had been accustomed to rely. The disposal of the Clergy Reserves was a matter as to which it was not to be expected that the advocates of a State Church could agree with the advocates of secularization, but they at least agreed in wishing to see the matter disposed of, and removed from the arena of Parliamentary controversy. Even so staunch a Churchman as Sir Allan MacNab was emphatic in his protestations against the dilatory course pursued by the Ministry. "The present Government," said he, "have had a large majority at their command year after year, but they have wholly neglected to proceed to the settlement of this question, alleging as their excuse that they could do nothing without Imperial permission. That permission has now been obtained, but Ministers still continue to find excuses for delay." Mr. Sherwood followed to the same purport. Mr. (John A.) Macdonald and Mr. Brown also participated in the debate, and made speeches strongly condemnatory of the Government. The discussion closed on the night of Tuesday, the 20th, when the amendments of Mr. Cauchon and Mr. Sicotte were carried by a majority of 13, the division being 42 to 29. Mr. Cauchon's amendment expressed regret that a ministerial measure for settling the Seigniorial Tenure question was not to be submitted during the session; and Mr. Sicotte's added the words "or one for the immediate settlement of the Clergy Reserves." Both the Conservative and Liberal Opposition could conscientiously unite in supporting this amendment, which merely recognized the expediency of a "settlement," without imposing any conditions as to the nature of that settlement. We accordingly find among the majority the names of persons of every shade of Provincial politics, between whom there was no sentiment in common except a desire to overturn the Ministry. The vote was practically one of non-confidence in the Administration, and was so regarded. Mr. Hincks moved an adjournment until the following Thursday

(the 22nd), in order that the Ministry might have time to decide what course they should adopt under the circumstances. The motion was carried, and the House adjourned accordingly.

The appointed Thursday was looked forward to with eager expectation, and the most conflicting rumours were rife as to what the day would bring forth. When the time of meeting arrived there was a very full attendance of members. Scarcely had the Speaker taken the chair ere the roar of guns was heard announcing Lord Elgin's departure from Government House. The session, then, was to be brought to a close, and his Excellency was already on his way to effect that purpose. Sir Allan MacNab hurriedly got upon his feet, and enquired of the Ministry if they had determined that there was to be an immediate prorogation. Mr. Morin replied to the query by an inclination of his head. "And," asked Sir Allan, "is there to be an immediate dissolution?" Again Mr. Morin nodded. "Then," said the Knight, in a tone of considerable excitement, "I protest, in the name of the Opposition, against our being broken up in such a manner! I declare, on behalf of myself and friends, that we are quite prepared to make a respectful reply to his Excellency's Speech: that we are ready to pass a Bill bringing the new Franchise Act at once into operation, and to grant the necessary supplies for the current year!" A moment's pause ensued, whereupon Mr. Mackenzie arose and indulged in an almost hysterical attack upon the occupants of the Treasury benches. He characterized their proceedings as contemptible and unbecoming in any body of men entrusted with the direction of public affairs. In the course of his remarks he asked permission to introduce a Bill for the secularization of the Reserves. While he was haranguing the House, Black Rod knocked at the door, and the Sergeant-at-arms approached the Bar and communicated the fact. A stormy scene ensued, a score of persons attempting to make themselves heard at once. Black Rod, it was said, should remain at the door until members could have time to express their

views. Mr. Mackenzie, despairing of making himself heard, ceased his harangue and sat down, whereupon Mr. John A. Macdonald took the floor, and made a vigorous attack upon the Ministry, whose course he declared to be unconstitutional, and due to a desire to prevent any enquiry into their corrupt practices until after the elections should be over. Other speakers attempted to address the House, but the uproar had by this time become so great that they could not be heard to any purpose. The Speaker had meanwhile been considering what to do with Black Rod. He at last decided that that functionary must be admitted. The door was accordingly opened to him, and the members proceeded to the Court House, where the Legislative Council were sitting, and where the Governor was awaiting the arrival of his "faithful Commons."

While the members of the Assembly are wending their way to the Council Chamber, it is worth while to glance for a moment at the constitutional aspect of affairs. The 31st section of the Union Act * provided that a Parliamentary session should be held at least once in every year, so that not more than twelve months should intervene between session and session. Now, according to Parliamentary usage, at least one Bill must be passed through all its stages by both Houses, in order to constitute a session. In the case under consideration no Bill had been passed, and the limited time had expired. Here was a chance to attack the Government on purely constitutional grounds. and of this chance the Speaker did not neglect to avail himself. He had never forgiven Mr. Hincks for assigning the Attorney-Generalship for Upper Canada to Mr. Richards instead of to himself, upon the formation of the Cabinet in the autumn of 1851. It was his duty, as Speaker, to call attention to any infringement of the constitution, and he accordingly prepared a pithy address to be delivered at the appropriate time.

* *Ante*, pp. 286, 287, *note*.

The appropriate time arrived when the Assembly reached the Council Chamber. The Speaker reached the Bar, and his Excellency held out his hand to receive from his Secretary the closing Speech. Much to the astonishment of Lord Elgin and his Ministers, the Speaker then produced a paper from which he read the address which he had prepared for the occasion, and which was in the following words: "MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY: It has been the immemorial custom of the Speaker of the Commons House of Parliament to communicate to the Throne the general result of the deliberations of the Assembly upon the principal objects which have employed the attention of Parliament during the period of their labours. It is not now part of my duty thus to address your Excellency, inasmuch as there has been no Act passed or judgment of Parliament obtained since we were honoured by your Excellency's announcement of the cause of summoning the Parliament by your gracious Speech from the Throne. The passing of an Act through its several stages, according to the law and custom of Parliament (solemnly declared applicable to the Parliamentary proceedings of this Province, by a decision of the Legislative Assembly of 1841), is held to be necessary to constitute a session of Parliament. This we have been unable to accomplish, owing to the command which your Excellency has laid upon us to meet you this day for the purpose of prorogation. At the same time, I feel called upon to assure your Excellency, on the part of Her Majesty's faithful Commons, that it is not from any want of respect to yourself, or to the august personage whom you represent in these Provinces, that no answer has been returned by the Legislative Assembly to your gracious Speech from the Throne."

After being read over in English, this address was repeated in French. Persons who were present on the occasion have recorded that his Excellency's countenance displayed "deep displeasure and annoyance"* at being compelled to listen to what he could not

* See Mr. Fennings Taylor's "Portraits of British Americans," Vol. I., p. 100.

regard otherwise than as a censure upon his Ministers and a reprimand to himself. The episode being ended, he recovered his equanimity, and prorogued Parliament with a very brief Speech, in which an immediate dissolution was announced.

The dissolution followed immediately, and the elections were fixed to come off in July and August. All through these hot summer months the campaign was carried on with tremendous vigour. The question before the country was whether the Government possessed the confidence of the people. In Lower Canada Mr. Morin continued to receive a large measure of loyal support from his compatriots, though he was beaten in Terrebonne, and was finally compelled to find a seat in the constituency of Chicoutimi and Tadoussac. Mr. Drummond was again returned for Shefford, Mr. Chauveau for Quebec County, and Mr. Chabot for Bellechasse. Mr. Dunbar Ross, Solicitor-General East, was returned for Beauce. The Upper Canadian Ministers had to contend against a combination of hostile influences. The Conservative press unanimously opposed them. *The Globe*, of course, echoed the opinions of Mr. Brown. *The North American*, which had been the chief supporter of the Government in Upper Canada, was now in opposition, as was likewise *The Examiner*. Mr. Mackenzie, who now coöperated with Mr. Brown, had also begun to issue his *Message*, which was for the most part written by himself, and which assailed the Ministry from week to week with hyper-fervid utterances. The only ably-conducted metropolitan newspaper to array itself on the ministerial side was *The Leader*, which had been started in Toronto by Mr. James Beaty in 1852. The sharpest thorn in the ministerial flesh was unquestionably *The Globe*, which went the length of supporting Conservatives in preference to ministerial candidates.* Against such tactics, and such odds, the Ministry could not hope to maintain their ground.

* In Hamilton, for instance, *The Globe* supported Sir Allan MacNab against Mr. Isaac Buchanan. It will doubtless surprise the younger politicians of the present generation to learn that *The Globe* also supported Mr. John A. Macdonald and Mr. Cayley against ministerial candidates.

Mr. Brown himself opposed and defeated Mr. Malcolm Cameron in Lambton, a new constituency created by the recently-passed Representation Act.* Dr. Rolph was reëlected for Norfolk, and Mr. Hincks, in spite of the determined opposition brought to bear against him, was returned for two constituencies, South Oxford and Renfrew. Mr. J. C. Morrison, Solicitor-General West, was also reëlected for Niagara. But the complete returns for Upper Canada shewed only about thirty names out of sixty-five in favour of the Ministry, whereas all their most dangerous opponents had found seats—Mr. Brown for Lambton, Mr. Mackenzie for his former constituency of Haldimand, Mr. (J. S.) Macdonald for Glengarry, and Mr. Cauchon for Montmorency. Mr. Cameron, having been beaten as abovementioned by Mr. Brown, did not offer himself elsewhere, and for some years afterwards remained out of Parliament. Mr. Papineau did not present himself for reëlection, but voluntarily withdrew from public life. He had become alive to the mistake he had made in reëntering the Parliamentary arena after his return from exile. He might doubtless have continued to find a seat in the Assembly as long as he had chosen to seek one, but his life's work was over, and by his continuance in Parliament he would merely have subjected himself to ceaseless worry and turmoil to no purpose. The rest of his days were spent in dignified and scholarly retirement. He attained extreme old age, and died at Montebello, his beautiful home on the banks of the Ottawa, in September, 1871.

All the leading Conservative members in the upper section of the Province were returned. Sir Allan MacNab, John A. Macdonald, William Cayley, W. B. Robinson, John Hillyard Cameron and Edmund Murney, came successfully out of their respective election contests, and took their seats at the opening of the session. Among other members of the Assembly with whom the reader is acquainted

* It had previously formed part of the constituency of Kent, which had been represented in the Assembly by Mr. Cameron during the last two Parliaments.

may be mentioned W. H. Merritt, John Young, A. T. Galt, G. E. Cartier, A. J. Ferguson, J. C. Chapais and L. V. Sicotte. Conspicuous among the new members were Luther Hamilton Holton, Antoine Aimé Dorion, Jean Baptiste Eric Dorion, Michael Hamilton Foley and Robert Spence. With Mr. Holton the reader is already acquainted.* He took his seat as one of the members for Montreal City. Mr. A. A. Dorion, who had also been returned as a member for Montreal, was a distinguished member of the local bar. He held advanced political opinions, and became the recognized leader of the *Rouges* at the outset of his Parliamentary career. He possessed fine natural abilities, in addition to an educational training of exceptional thoroughness, and a courtly and polished manner; qualifications which, added to a spotless moral reputation, enabled him to launch himself on the tide of public life with many advantages in his favour. His command of choice English was unrivalled by any French member of the House, and the delicate purity of his accent was such as few foreigners ever attain. He was destined to a long, honourable and useful political career, and to receive the honour of knighthood at the hands of his Sovereign. He is at the present time Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of Quebec. J. B. E. Dorion was the founder of *l'Avenir*, the organ of the *Rouges*, and his political opinions were of the radically advanced order to be expected from one occupying such a position. He took his seat for the constituency of Drummond and Arthabaska. Mr. Foley, who had been returned for the North Riding of Waterloo, was, as his name indicates, an Irishman, but he had lived in Canada from boyhood, and had early imbibed Liberal principles. He was an attorney by profession, but was chiefly known as a clever newspaper writer. He developed into an effective speaker, and a conspicuous member of Parliament. Mr. Spence was also an Irishman by birth,

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 217.

who had made his way to Canada early in life, and who had by turns been an auctioneer, a schoolmaster, and a newspaper editor at Dundas. He was an enthusiastic Reformer, and a firm supporter of Mr. Hincks. He enjoyed the distinction of becoming a Cabinet Minister before he had sat a week in Parliament.

Such were the principal changes brought about by the elections of 1854. The country as a whole had pronounced emphatically in favour of the secularization of the Clergy Reserves and the abolition of the Seigniorial Tenure. While the elections were in progress, news arrived from England that an Act had been passed by the Imperial Parliament empowering the Canadian Legislature to alter the constitution of the Legislative Council, and to apply the elective principle to that body, in accordance with the terms of the Address which had been forwarded from the Assembly during the previous year.* This Act, which received the royal assent on the 11th of August, was an important concession, and was appreciated as such in Canada. How it was acted upon will hereafter appear. Parliament was summoned for the 5th of September, and as the situation was an interesting and critical one, there was a very full attendance on the day of opening.

The composition of the Upper House had undergone no change since the previous session. The full membership of the Assembly, under the new Representation Act, was 130. Of these, 121 took their seats at the opening. Seven only were absent; and two seats were vacant, owing to double returns.† The new Assembly was made up of three distinct parties: Ministerialists, Conservatives, and advanced Reformers. The Ministerialists, who were the most numerous of the three, were chiefly composed of moderate Reformers

* *Ante*, p. 271.

† The two members honoured with a double return were Mr. Hincks, elected for Renfrew and South Oxford, and Mr. Chabot, elected for Quebec City and Bellechasse. The former signified his pleasure to sit for Renfrew, and the latter elected to sit for Quebec.

from both sections of the Province. The Conservatives, who acknowledged the leadership of Sir Allan MacNab, for the most part represented Upper Canadian constituencies. The advanced Reformers were made up of Upper Canadian Clear Grits and Lower Canadian *Rouges*. At the head of the former was Mr. George Brown; at the head of the latter, Mr. A. A. Dorion. Mr. Brown had been brought to ally himself with the radical element by the sheer force of his opposition to the Government; so that now, without having in any material respect modified his views, he had become the Parliamentary colleague of William Lyon Mackenzie, and the acknowledged leader of the Clear Grits, whom he had lately contemned and reviled. In Lower Canada there had been an evident reaction in favour of the *Rouges*, nineteen of whom now arrayed themselves under Mr. Dorion's banner in opposition to the Government. A majority of them were persons of great earnestness and ability, who could not fail to make their presence felt in Parliament.

The preparations for the vote on the Speakership had been made with unusual care, as that vote would evidently afford a fair indication of the strength of parties. The ministerial candidate was Mr. George E. Cartier. The candidate of the Clear Grit party was Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald, who had been Speaker throughout the last Parliament, but who, as has been seen, had never forgiven Mr. Hincks for not making him Attorney-General, and had lost no opportunity of proving his antagonism to the Administration. The Government had shown some desire to appease him by adopting him as their candidate for the Speakership at the beginning of the first session of the last Parliament, but he was not to be mollified by such means. He had capped the climax of his hostility by presenting to the Governor the address already referred to, at the close of the short session in June. It was a foregone conclusion that he would now be opposed by the full strength of the Government. The Lower Canadian Opposition put forward Mr. Sicotte. A distinct under-

standing seems to have been arrived at between the Conservatives and Radicals to act in concert on this question of the Speakership, for the purpose of defeating the Ministry. It was not generally believed that Mr. Sicotte had any chance of being elected, but in order to conciliate the Lower Canadian Opposition the Clear Grits and Conservatives agreed that that gentleman's name should be submitted, and that in case of his rejection his supporters should vote for Mr. Macdonald. For several days before the opening repeated caucuses had been held, and it was apparent that the contest would be a close one, but Mr. Macdonald's chances of election were believed to be remarkably good.

No sooner had the Governor-General withdrawn, after saluting his new Parliament, and suggesting to them the expediency of proceeding to the election of a Speaker, than Mr. W. B. Lindsay, the Clerk of the Assembly, took the Chair. Mr. Cartier was then proposed by Mr. Spence. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Lemieux, member for Levis. Mr. A. A. Dorion then proposed Mr. Sicotte, and Mr. Scatcherd, from West Middlesex, proposed Mr. J. S. Macdonald; the respective proposals being seconded by Mr. Hartman, of North York, and Mr. Matheson, of North Oxford. A brief but animated debate followed, in the course of which several of the young *Rouges* displayed a high degree of oratorical ability. Mr. Mackenzie also made an able speech in favour of Mr. Macdonald, in the course of which he strongly condemned Mr. Cartier's course in the last Parliament, especially with reference to the Grand Trunk Railway. When the debate was concluded the Clerk put the question to the House: Shall Mr. Cartier be Speaker? The vote was taken, and resulted in the rejection of Mr. Cartier's candidature by a majority of three, the vote standing 62 to 59. The vote from his native Province gave him a majority of nine, but he was left in a minority of twelve as regarded the Upper Canadian members. Mr. Sicotte's name was next submitted. "The yeas will please

rise," remarked the Clerk; whereupon Mr. Sicotte's supporters stood up in their places. They were comparatively few, and it was evident that their candidate was beaten. But the proverb about the cup and the lip received another exemplification. Mr. Hincks had penetrated the tactics of the Opposition, and made his calculations accordingly. His own candidate had been defeated, and the Ministry were doomed. What then? At any rate his sceptre had not yet departed from him, and he could still show his teeth to some purpose. If he was too weak to elect Mr. Cartier to the Speakership, he was at any rate powerful enough to prevent the election of Mr. Macdonald. He resolved that the man who had presented the address to Lord Elgin less than three months before—an address which had implied a grave censure upon the Government—should not recline in the Speaker's Chair. Not a moment was to be lost. The Clerk had counted Mr. Sicotte's supporters, and was just about to call for the nays, when the Inspector-General sprang to his feet, and exclaimed: "Put me among the yeas." This was the cue to the entire body of Ministerialists, who followed their leader's example, and declared themselves for Mr. Sicotte. The result was that that gentleman was elected by a majority of thirty-five, and that Mr. Macdonald was left to derive such satisfaction as he could from the dignity of private membership.

It will thus be seen that Mr. Sicotte's election was brought about by the combined votes of the Ministerialists and the Lower Canadian Opposition—namely, the *Rouges*. The Clear Grits and Upper Canadian Conservatives all, or nearly all, were supporters of Mr. Macdonald. But the combination of Ministerialists and *Rouges* was purely accidental, and was not significant of any alliance for the ordinary purposes of legislation. The Ministerialists still composed the most numerous party in the Assembly, but being confronted—as they unquestionably would have been on all ordinary questions—by

the combined influence of the Conservatives, Clear Grits and *Rouges*, there was no possibility of their remaining in power. The political sympathies of the various branches of the Opposition, wide as the poles asunder on every other point, were identical so far as an eager desire to overturn the Government was concerned. The situation, indeed, bore a close analogy to the political crisis of 1842.*

The Ministry, however, did not act with undue haste, and resolved to gauge the situation thoroughly before tendering their resignations. The vote on the Speakership, while it had afforded a plain indication of ministerial weakness, could hardly be said to have conclusively established the extent of that weakness. It would be time enough to resign after they should have failed to carry the Address in Reply. The House adjourned until the following day, when the Governor came down to the Council Chamber and delivered the Speech from the Throne. It referred to the increase in the membership of the Assembly, and to the recently concluded measure of reciprocity with the United States, as to which it was suggested that the tariff should be remodelled in accordance with the provisions of the treaty. Reference was also made to the important concessions made to Canada by the mother country in the two Acts passed by the Imperial Parliament with respect to the Clergy Reserves and the Legislative Council. The subject of the Seigniorial Tenure was touched upon, but in a very cautious, non-committal fashion which was far from satisfactory to the advocates of root-and-branch abolition.

The Government had by this time become convinced that nothing was to be gained by postponing the evil day. Mr. Hincks had hoped that he would be able to command a majority of supporters from his own section of the Province, and that he would thereby be able to reinforce Mr. Morin. That hope had been proved to be baseless by the Speakership vote, which, as has been seen, had left Mr. Cartier in a

* See *ante*, Chapter XI.

minority of twelve as regarded Upper Canada. Mr. Hincks was thus impelled to the conclusion that he would not be justified in remaining in an Administration with his colleagues from Lower Canada when he could not command the confidence of his own section.* He was confirmed in this opinion on the evening of the 7th, when the Opposition raised a question of privilege and carried it against the Government, Dr. Rolph himself voting against his colleagues.† No sooner was this result declared than the entire Ministry resolved upon an immediate demission of office, a resolution which they carried out on the following morning. His Excellency accepted the resignations, and thus, on the morning of Friday, the 8th of September, 1854, the Hincks-Morin Ministry ceased to exist.

They had been an exceptionally industrious and enterprising Government, and were responsible for a great deal of important and useful legislation. During their tenure of office the country made great and rapid advancement in population, in wealth, and in the refining accompaniments of civilized life. Theirs was especially the railway era, and out of the projects then set on foot most of the important Canadian railway enterprises of more recent times may be said to have been developed. They are fully entitled to whatever credit is to be attached to the completion of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, and to the procuring of the Imperial Acts authorizing the Canadian Parliament to deal with the Clergy Reserves and the Legislative Council. The Acts extending the franchise and providing for an increased representation of the people were among the most noteworthy of the measures passed during their tenure of office. The Act respecting the Legislative Council, as has been seen, had also been passed by the Assembly as a Government

*See Mr. Hincks's speech delivered in the Assembly on the 8th of September, 1854.

†Dr. Rolph had for some time previously shown symptoms of disaffection. He was somewhat advanced in life, and not well adapted to discharge the duties incidental to the head of a department. He would doubtless have resigned, even had the Government remained in power.

measure, but had been prevented from becoming law by the intractability of that branch of the Legislature to which it directly referred. Owing to the combined influences brought to bear against them, the Hincks-Morin Administration were prevented from achieving the full fruition of their labours, and their successors were enabled to reap the most goodly portion of the crop which they had sown. Yet they accomplished sufficient to render the three years of their dominion a distinct and well-marked epoch in the Provincial annals. At the time of their accession the country was prosperous and flourishing. Though their *régime* was marked by great expenditure of public funds, they left the Provincial finances in a satisfactory condition, and the Provincial credit abroad may be said to have been for the first time thoroughly established under their auspices. They were called upon to grapple with questions as to which great divergence of opinion prevailed, and to say that they did not succeed in satisfying all parties is merely to say that they were neither omniscient nor omnipotent. Their fall was due to party combinations rather than to their own inherent weakness, and they fell without dishonour.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE ALLIANCE.

"The Government of the country *must* be carried on. It *ought* to be carried on with vigour. If that can be done in no other way than by mutual concessions and a coalition of parties, they become necessary. And those who, under such circumstances, assume the arduous duty of becoming parties to them, so far from deserving the opprobrium that is too frequently and often too successfully heaped upon them, have, in my opinion, the strongest claims upon public sympathy and support."—*Letter of the Hon. Robert Baldwin to the Hon. Francis Hincks*, dated 22nd September, 1854.

THE resignation took place, as already mentioned, on the morning of Friday, the 8th of September. Whither was the Governor to turn in this emergency? The ex-Ministers still commanded the vote of the most numerous and powerful of the three parties in the Assembly. As a corollary, neither of the other two parties was strong enough to stand alone. The Clear Grits and *Rouges*, though strong in talent and energy, were possessed of too little coherence, and were moreover too few in number,* to admit of their seriously attempting, without aid from one of the other parties, to form an Administration which could hope to command public confidence. They could look for no aid from the supporters of the ex-Ministry, most of whom regarded them as deserters from sound Liberal principles, and as political agitators whom it was not safe to entrust with power. They could hope for none from the Conservatives, who were too little satisfied with the result of their temporary coalition

* Their combined force numbered about 40 members, out of a House of 130.

with them on the question of the Speakership to wish to extend or continue that connection. The Conservatives, though not numerically formidable, and though not without internal dissensions of their own, might be depended upon to vote almost as one man in a great Parliamentary emergency. They counted in their ranks several gentlemen of wide legislative knowledge and experience, conspicuous among whom were Sir Allan MacNab, John A. Macdonald and William Cayley. Sir Allan was a Parliamentary veteran, and his advice could not fail to be serviceable at such a crisis. To him accordingly, as the acknowledged leader of his party, Lord Elgin had recourse, and the task of forming an Administration was entrusted to his hands. Sir Allan consulted with Mr. Macdonald and other leading coadjutors, and in the course of a few hours a plan was matured which was afterwards successfully carried out.

The situation may be briefly summed up in this wise. Responsible Government being an admitted principle in our constitution, no Administration could hold power unless it could command a majority of the votes in the Assembly. No new Government could hope to command such a majority unless it could obtain the support of the old Liberal party in both sections of the Province; that is to say, of the moderate Reformers who had supported the policy of the Hincks-Morin Ministry. Now, it was evident enough that there could be no alliance between the Clear Grits of Upper Canada and the Lower Canadian Liberals who acknowledged the leadership of Mr. Morin. At the head of the Clear Grits was Mr. Brown, with whom, for reasons already fully explained, no French Canadian of moderate views would at that time have allied himself. But there was no insuperable antagonism between the French Canadian moderates and the Upper Canadian Conservatives; nothing to prevent a junction of their Parliamentary forces. They were indeed in some respects the natural allies of each other, and had for several years past been gradually assimilating. True, that

very same French Canadian element had, as we have seen,* twice refused to enter into such an alliance; but years had elapsed since then, and the circumstances had undergone a material change. It was necessary that a compromise of some sort should be effected, and this was the most practicable one that seemed to offer.

The active mind of Mr. John A. Macdonald was not slow to take in these various phases of the situation, and it is commonly understood that his was the hand that shaped the course of subsequent negotiations. Since his entry into Parliament, ten years before, he had outgrown many of the party traditions of those times, and his mind had undergone a considerable transformation in the direction of Liberalism. Here, he perceived, was an opportunity for remodelling the Conservative party upon such a basis as might not improbably restore a large measure of their ancient prestige, and secure them in power for years to come. Some of the old party lines must be abandoned, and a policy more in accordance with modern ideas must be adopted. The Clergy Reserves, for instance, was a question on which Conservatives had from the first taken an uncompromising stand in favour of the ultra pretensions of the Church of England. But such an attitude was no longer tenable by a party that hoped to secure any considerable share of popular support. The general elections which had just taken place had proved most incontestably that the public voice imperatively demanded secularization. Many Conservative candidates had gone to the polls pledged to vote for secularization in case the public opinion of the Province should be unequivocally declared in favour of such a step. Several other questions of less importance stood on a similar footing. Nothing was more certain than that no stable Government could be formed which would not consent to the immediate introduction of a Secularization Bill as a Government measure. Mr. Macdonald and a majority of the most distinguished members of his party deter-

**Ante*, pp. 21, 89.

mined to make the best of the situation, and bow to the popular will. Their views had doubtless undergone modification in the course of the interminable debates on the Clergy Reserves.

Sir Allan MacNab, however, had hitherto held consistently by the principles which he had always professed, and had refused to abandon the cherished convictions of a lifetime at the bidding of expediency. The hour had now arrived for him to choose between becoming a party to secularization and abandoning the leadership to a younger and more liberal-minded man. That Mr. Macdonald was the coming leader was already sufficiently apparent, but he was young, and could well afford to wait. Sir Allan had been identified with Upper Canadian Conservatism from his youth. During his Parliamentary career he had struggled in its behalf with a zeal which certainly was not according to knowledge, but which as certainly was sincere. Such a man could not now be summarily "shelved" or thrown aside; unless, indeed, he should prove to be thoroughly impracticable. The gallant knight had begun to feel the infirmities of declining years, but he did not feel those infirmities half so keenly as he felt his own waning influence and the growing power of his young rival. He well knew that if he refused to do what was demanded of him his candlestick would be removed out of its place —a removal not to be contemplated with an equable mind. After much deliberation, he proved open to conviction, and accepted the responsibilities of the position. Having resolved himself on this point, he had no difficulty in accepting all other conditions, the most material of which involved an alliance with the French Canadian moderates. He accordingly lost no time in putting himself into communication with Mr. Morin, and submitting the project of a coalition between the two parties which they respectively represented. Mr. Morin, after conferring with some of his political friends, returned a favourable answer to the proposal; and it was then agreed that the ex-Ministerialists of Upper Canada should be

included in the arrangement. A platform was laid down which included the immediate secularization of the Clergy Reserves and the passing of a measure regulating the Seigniorial Tenure. Mr. Hincks's concurrence was obtained, and he agreed to secure the support of his Upper Canadian adherents upon the understanding that he himself should have the privilege of naming two members of the proposed Administration, by way of security that the platform agreed upon should be faithfully carried out. The gentlemen so named by him were John Ross and Robert Spence. The ex-Ministerialist members, as a body, were easily induced to enter into the arrangement. Being unable to carry on the Government without assistance, it was a mere question with them as to which party they should choose for their allies. They upon the whole preferred a Conservative alliance to one with the Radicals who had conspired to break up the great party to which they belonged, and whose policy they regarded as altogether too extreme for the country and the times.*

All negotiations having been completed, the new Government was sworn into office on the 11th of the month. It contained six members of the late Ministry and four Conservatives. Its composition was as follows:

UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. Sir Allan N. MacNab, President of the Council and Minister of Agriculture.

* "The question that arose in the minds of the old Liberals was this: Shall we hand over the Government of this country to the men who, calling themselves Liberals, have broken up the Liberal party by the declaration of extravagant views, by the enunciation of principles far more radical and reckless than any we are prepared to accept, and by a restless ambition which we cannot approve? Or shall we not rather unite with the Conservatives, who have gone to the country declaring, in reference to the great questions which then agitated it, that if the decision at the polls was against them they would no longer offer resistance to their settlement, but would, on the contrary, assist in such a solution of them as would forever remove them from the sphere of public or political agitation?"—Speech of Mr. Thomas White Jr., delivered at L'Orignal, March 5th, 1874.

The Hon. John A. Macdonald, Attorney-General West.
" " William Cayley, Inspector-General.
" " Robert Spence, Postmaster-General.
" " John Ross, Speaker of the Legislative Council.

LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. A. N. Morin, Commissioner of Crown Lands.
" " L. T. Drummond, Attorney-General East.
" P. J. O. Chauveau, Provincial Secretary.
" " E. P. Taché, Receiver-General.
" " J. Chabot, Commissioner of Public Works.

It will be seen that the Lower Canadian section of the Cabinet remained unaffected by the change of Ministry, and that Sir Allan MacNab now found himself seated side by side, and in daily fraternal intercourse with, those whom he had stigmatized as "rebels and aliens" during the debates on the Rebellion Losses Bill. Mr. Dunbar Ross, late Solicitor-General for Lower Canada, was reinstated in that position, and the corresponding office for Upper Canada was conferred upon Mr. Henry Smith, member for Frontenac, and a staunch Conservative.

The coalition thus formed is known to our history as the MacNab-Morin Government. It was acquiesced in by nearly the entire Conservative party of both sections of the Province, and by an overwhelming majority of the ex-Ministerialists.* It received the approval of Robert Baldwin, whose opinions were still regarded with respect by the Liberal party generally, and who sent forth, from his quiet retreat at Spadina, a cordial letter to Mr. Hincks, in

* The only member of the late Ministry who disapproved of the new combination was Dr. Rolph, who had been regarded as "unsafe" for some time before the resignation. He joined the ranks of the Opposition, but was not a specially conspicuous figure there. His Parliamentary career came to an end at the close of the then-existing Fifth Parliament, when he retired from public life. He survived until the 19th of October, 1870, when he died at Mitchell, in the County of Perth, at the advanced age of seventy-eight years.

which that gentleman was declared to have acted with judgment and discretion, in the interest of his party and his country. The Grits and *Rouges* felt themselves to have been out-manœuvred, and, as might have been expected, denounced the "unholy alliance" as an utter abandonment of principle, owing to the want of accord between the political views of the members included in it. In spite of the strenuous efforts of the Opposition, however, the new Ministers were all successful in securing reëlection at the hands of their respective constituents, and the coalition received the support of a large majority of members from each section of the Province.

One important effect of the coalition was a practical annihilation of the two parties which had so long contended for the control of public affairs in Canada. The concession of Responsible Government had sounded the death-note of old-time Conservatism, which had ever since been dying from sheer inanition. Some of the ante-Union Tories clung to old party traditions with a tenacity which knew no abatement, but Mr. Macdonald and the more energetic spirits of the party had long perceived that a new departure was necessary, and the crisis of 1854 afforded the required opportunity for carrying it into effect. The hard-and-fast policy of former days was relaxed. It was recognized that Government was made for the people, and not people for the Government. The old Tories did not surrender without protest, and several of them, including John Hillyard Cameron, John W. Gamble and Edmund Murney, refused to acquiesce in the new doctrines. But with few exceptions modern ideas obtained the mastery. More liberal lines of policy were adopted, and the party underwent such a reorganization that it retained few vestiges of the Toryism that had been a distinguishing feature of the Government which, under varying names and phases, held the reins of power from the end of 1843 till the formation of the Liberal Administration in March, 1848. The remodelled party which then sprang into existence has ever since been known as

Liberal-Conservative. It formed the main strength of the coalition Administration of 1854, and for nineteen years thereafter it enjoyed an almost uninterrupted lease of power. By degrees it absorbed the more Conservative element in the old Liberal party which had acknowledged the leadership of Messieurs Baldwin and Lafontaine. The remainder of them were absorbed by the Opposition, and the Baldwin-Lafontaine Reformers, as a separate party, practically ceased to exist. The adoption by the Liberal-Conservatives of the Secularization and Seigniorial Tenure measures left the old Reformers without any substantial excuse for a separate and distinct existence. Another result of the combination was the virtual extinction of the British party in Lower Canada as a separate political body. Ever since the Union that party had acted in unison with the Upper Canadian Conservatives. They now readily gave in their adhesion to the arrangements of the coalition Ministry, and for the future voted with the French Canadian majority.

It was no small thing that had been accomplished under the auspices of Mr. Macdonald and his confreres. Some idea of its direct results may be derived from the simple statement that whereas three-fourths of the Upper Canadian members had been returned in the Reform interest, they now found themselves supporting a Government which had really been brought about by their political opponents. And in the event of the Government promptly proceeding to redeem their pledges—pledges which included the whole of the ex-Ministerial programme—there would be no excuse for withdrawing a support which had been voluntarily accorded. As for the Lower Canadian Liberals, most of them felt much more at home with their new allies than they had ever done with their former ones. An alliance between the Upper Canadian Conservatives and the Lower Canadian Liberals had indeed long been foreseen, and would doubtless have taken place years before this time had it not been for the strong personal bond of union between Mr. Baldwin and Mr.

Lafontaine. And thus it came about that the coalition Government found themselves strong in the support of about two-thirds of the entire representation.

The various clauses of the Address in Reply were carried by large majorities. The legislative business was then proceeded with. Attorney-General Drummond introduced and carried through a Bill giving effect, on behalf of Canada, to the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States. Similar measures were soon afterwards passed by the Legislatures of the Maritime Provinces, and the treaty having also received the approval of the British Parliament and the American Congress, it came into effect in March, 1855. The other two great measures of the session were the Secularization and Seigniorial Tenure Bills. The former was introduced into the Assembly by Attorney-General Macdonald on the 17th of October. It was not precisely such a measure in all its details as the Upper Canadian Opposition would have framed. It was, however, a wise and statesmanlike piece of legislation, which finally set the long-pending dispute at rest, and at the same time paid due respect to vested interests. It will be remembered * that the Imperial Act of 1840 authorized a sale of the Reserves, and a distribution of the proceeds among the various religious bodies in unequal proportions. The Provincial measure now passed abolished all distinctions between those bodies by depriving them all alike—the Church of England as well as the rest—of any participation in the fund. It was enacted that the proceeds arising from all sales should be paid into the hands of the Receiver-General, by whom, after the deduction of expenses, they were to be apportioned equally among the several county and city municipalities, in proportion to population. The amount so apportioned was in each case to be paid over to the treasurer, chamberlain or other officer having the legal custody of

* *Ante*, p. 201.

the municipal funds, to form part of the general funds of the municipality, and to be applicable to ordinary municipal purposes. The annual stipends or allowances which had been charged upon the Reserves before the passing (in 1853) of the last Imperial Act on the subject were treated as vested interests which the faith of the Crown was pledged to support, and provision was accordingly made for their continued payment during the lives of existing incumbents. The Provincial Government were authorized to commute such stipends, with the consent of the parties interested, for their value in money. The authority was acted upon; and thus was laid the foundation for a small permanent endowment—an arrangement which roused the ire of the Opposition, but against which they contended in vain. Such, in brief, was the purport of the Clergy Reserves Secularization Act of 1854, which removed one of the greatest abuses to which the Province had ever been subjected.

The Act respecting the Seigniorial Tenure was passed through its various stages almost *pari passu* with that respecting the Clergy Reserves. It underwent many and important amendments in the Legislative Council, which amendments were accepted by the Assembly, so that the measure, as finally passed, bore little resemblance to the Bill as originally introduced by Attorney-General Drummond. While abolishing all feudal rights and duties in Lower Canada, "whether bearing upon the *censitaire* or the seignior," it secured compensation to the latter for the vested rights which he had acquired by lapse of time. The Governor was authorized to appoint commissioners to enquire into the respective rights of the Crown and the seigniors in the various seigniories, and to fix the respective values. A tribunal was provided for the determination of all questions arising out of the enquiry; and a commutation fund was set apart for the indemnification of the despoiled seigniors. It may here be added that five years elapsed before the labours of the commissioners were completed, whereupon it was found that a

small additional appropriation was required. Parliament granted the requisite sum, and this was the last of the Seigniorial Tenure.

The remaining legislation of the session calls for no particular remark. With the settlement of the two momentous questions just referred to, the last of the great reforms of other days were removed from the arena of Parliamentary controversy. The session came to a close on the 18th of December, when the Houses adjourned to the 23rd of the following February. Lord Elgin was just on the eve of taking his final departure from the Province, and his successor, Sir Edmund Head, had for some time been at Quebec, ready to assume his official duties.

His lordship relinquished the charge of the Government to his successor on the day following the adjournment. Three days later he set out for England, by way of New York, whence he sailed in the steamship *Pacific* on the 28th. He landed at Liverpool on the 9th day of the new year. Soon after his arrival at home he received an offer of the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, with a seat in the Cabinet, but he preferred to rest for a season from all official employment, and declined the post. He spent the greater part of the next two years in quiet retirement at Broomhall, the family seat in Fifeshire. But he was too useful a man to be permitted to remain in the obscurity of private life. The history of his mission to China and Japan in 1857, '58 and '59, is well known through the narrative of his secretary, Mr. Lawrence Oliphant. Scarcely had he returned from this expedition ere he accepted the office of Postmaster-General in Lord Palmerston's Government. Fresh complications in the East rendered necessary a second mission to China on the part of his Lordship in the spring of 1860. Having accomplished the object of his mission, in conjunction with the emissaries of the French Government, by opening Pekin to British diplomacy, he returned to England in April, 1861. Almost immediately afterwards the Viceroyalty of India, which Lord Canning

was just about to vacate, was offered to him by the Government of the day. So splendid an appointment was not to be refused. He quitted England, never to return, towards the close of January, 1862. He reached Calcutta in March, and conducted the affairs of his Administration about twenty months: a period too short to enable him to master all the duties incidental to so important a position: but he continued the wise policy which had been inaugurated by his predecessor, Lord Canning, and had his life been spared he might well have added the crowning sheaf to the very high reputation which he had already attained. But he was not destined to further achievement. While making a Viceregal progress through the North-West Provinces of India, during the autumn of 1863, grave disease of the heart rapidly developed itself in his system, and was doubtless seriously aggravated by the fatigue to which he was subjected at various stages of his journey. He died at Dhurmsala, under the shadow of the Himalayas, on the 20th of November, and was buried in the cemetery there, in a spot selected, at his request, by Lady Elgin herself.

His lordship's life was over, and well over. "Perhaps," says a sympathetic but discriminating critic,* "the noblest part of the history of England is to be found in the recorded lives of those who have been her chosen servants, and who have died in that service. Self-control, endurance, and an heroic sense of duty are more conspicuous in such men than the love of action and fame. But their lives are the landmarks of our race. Lord Elgin, it is true, can hardly be ranked with the first of British statesmen, or orators, or commanders. His services, great as they unquestionably were, had all been performed under the orders of other men. Even among his own contemporaries he fills a place in the second rank. But happy are the country and the age in which such men are to be found in the second rank, and are content to be there."

* See *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1873.



Chapter XXXV.

SIR EDMUND HEAD.

Dogberry.—An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind.
—Much Ado About Nothing, Act III., Sc. 5.

SIR EDMUND WALKER HEAD, the new Governor, was a kinsman of Sir Francis Bond Head, whose disastrous administration of Upper Canadian affairs nearly twenty years before this time had done much to provoke the rebellion which broke out in that Province towards the close of 1837. Sir Edmund and Sir Francis were descended from a common stock;

"but there
I doubt all likeness ends between the pair."

Sir Francis was a shallow, impulsive, superficial man, who never made a study of politics in their widest sense, and whose mental tone unfitted him for important public responsibility. Sir Edmund was a scholar and a thinker, who had had the advantage of a careful intellectual training, and had devoted much time to the study of politics as a science. He was the only son of the Reverend Sir John Head, baronet, Perpetual Curate of Egerton, in Kent, and Rector of Raleigh, Essex. He was born near Rochester, Kent, in 1805, and was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, where he obtained a first-class in classics in 1827. He subsequently became a Fellow of Merton College, and in 1834 was appointed a University Examiner, in which capacity, as already mentioned,* it fell to his lot to examine

* *Ante*, page 218.

the future Earl of Elgin for a Merton Fellowship. In point of scholastic acquirements we have never had a Governor of Canada who could seriously claim to be the peer of Sir Edmund Head. He was, more especially during his early life, a frequent contributor to the periodical press. A clever article of his in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* is said to have been the means of determining his vocation in life, by attracting the attention of the Marquis of Lansdowne, who in consequence of it advised him to turn his attention to ecclesiastical law. Such advice, from such a quarter, was not to be despised, as it implied a tacit promise of patronage. He devoted himself industriously to the prescribed course of study, and was soon after appointed an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, which led erelong to a Chief Commissionership at a salary of £2,000 a year. Having meanwhile succeeded, upon the death of his father in 1838, to the baronetcy, he in the same year married Miss Yorke, a great-grand-daughter of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. He gave much attention to colonial affairs, and in 1847 reaped the reward of his studies by receiving the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. This position he retained until his appointment as Lord Elgin's successor in September, 1854. He was sworn into office on the 19th of December, and thereupon assumed the direction of affairs.

The only matters of importance that occurred before the reassembling of Parliament were the reconstruction of the Lower Canadian section of the Ministry, which took place during the last week of January (1855), and the appointment, on the 8th of February, of six new Legislative Councillors. The latter consisted of Messieurs Ebenezer Perry, of Cobourg, David Morrison Armstrong, of Berthier, Benjamin Seymour, of Bath, Eusèbe Cartier, of St. Hyacinthe, Walter Hamilton Dickson, of Niagara, and Joseph Légaré, of Quebec. These appointments were distasteful to the Opposition, as it was well known that the authority conferred by

the Imperial Act of 1854* would shortly be acted upon, and that the Legislative Council would be made an elective body. A more important matter, however, was the ministerial reconstruction. The state of Mr. Morin's health had for some months past been unsatisfactory, and for that and other reasons he was desirous of being relieved from the cares of a department. A vacancy occurring on the bench of the Superior Court of Quebec afforded him an opportunity for a dignified retirement from political life. He availed himself of the opportunity, and exchanged the ministerial for the judicial bench. As a judge he displayed the same characteristics which had always distinguished him in professional and political life: namely, great industry, scrupulous integrity and high-mindedness, allied to becoming modesty and a courteous sweetness of disposition which endeared him to all who came within the circle of his personal influence. He continued to discharge his judicial duties until a short time before his death, which occurred near St. Hyacinthe, in June, 1865.

His retirement from the Ministry took place on the 26th of January. Colonel Taché, the Receiver-General, considered that the withdrawal of his sectional chief involved the dissolution of that wing of the Ministry which had acknowledged allegiance to him. In this view all the Lower Canadian Ministers concurred, and they accordingly placed their resignations in the hands of the Premier. Sir Allan conferred with Colonel Taché, as the senior Lower Canadian Minister, who consented to resume his portfolio; and at their joint request Mr. Drummond did the same. Messieurs Chauveau and Chabot did not resume office. The Provincial Secretaryship was conferred upon Mr. G. E. Cartier, the Commissionership of Public Works upon Mr. François Lemieux, member for Levis, and the Commissionership of Crown Lands, which had just been vacated by Mr. Morin, upon Mr. Cauchon. Under such circumstances was formed the MacNab-

* *Ante*, p. 298.

Taché Administration, which remained in power without any modification until the spring of the following year.

Messieurs Macdonald and Cartier were now for the first time brought together under one ministerial canopy. Their political stature had been steadily increasing ever since their entry into public life. The former was now the real, although not the nominal head of his party in Upper Canada. The latter had come to be accepted as the Parliamentary spokesman of a large number of his compatriots. The two continued to fight side by side so long as Mr. Cartier lived, and the fact that they were able to maintain an almost continuous lease of power for so many years must in no small degree be attributed to their joint and several personalities. Each possessed certain qualifications which the other lacked, and which made him specially useful to his coadjutor. Entire confidence subsisted between them for many years, and the regard of each for the other seems to have been high and sincere.

The prosperity of the Province continued without material abatement. The various railways in course of construction gave employment to an army of labourers, and had the effect of raising the prices of the necessaries of life. Expenditure was large, but wages were proportionate, and such a thing as abject want was almost unknown. The timber trade alone was in a depressed condition. There had been a great fall in the price of that commodity in England, owing in part to over supply, but chiefly to the Eastern war. This of course bore heavily upon that particular branch of Canadian industry, but business generally, more especially in Upper Canada, was brisk, and there was no apparent scarcity of money. There was a steady stream of immigration, and the country was rapidly developing. The Eastern conflict was the all-absorbing topic of interest. A patriotic fund was organized for the relief of the widows and orphans of those soldiers of the allied armies who fell in the struggle. It was subscribed to with the utmost liber-

ality, and the sums sent across the ocean swelled to momentous proportions.* From time to time the public pulse beat high in consequence of intelligence of the fall of Sebastopol having reached Canada. On several occasions illuminations glared throughout the Province from Gaspé to Sandwich in token of joy at that long-expected event; and as often the public enthusiasm was checked upon its becoming known that hope had told a flattering tale. Some months were yet to elapse ere the great event was to be celebrated upon sure intelligence, and with a fervour not less intense than was displayed in the mother-land.

Meanwhile the Provincial Parliament reassembled at Quebec on the 23rd of February, 1855, and continued in session more than three months. The intervening legislation was of a varied character, and consisted of 184 distinct measures. Important reforms were effected in the practice of some of the Courts of justice, and in the laws relating to the various grades of schools. A new Act reforming the municipal and road system of Lower Canada was introduced by Attorney-General Drummond, and carried as a Government measure. Other Acts extended the elective franchise to several classes of persons not previously qualified, and made more effectual provision for securing the independence of the Assembly. One of the most important measures of the session was an Act relating to the Provincial militia. Intimation had been received from England that, in consequence of the Crimean war, it had become necessary to withdraw a part of the Imperial troops from Canada. The Province of course had no international quarrels of its own, and was not menaced by any outside foes, but it was manifestly desirable that the land should not be left defenceless. The Militia Act of 1855 constituted the Governor Commander-in-Chief of the Provincial militia, which was divided into two classes, sedentary and active. It was enacted that, subject to certain exemptions

* Legislative aid was also granted in the same direction during the ensuing session.

and disqualifications, the sedentary militia should consist of all male inhabitants of the Province between eighteen and sixty years of age, and that those under forty should be mustered once a year. Provision was made for dividing the country into military districts, regimental divisions, and battalion divisions, with officers for each. The active militia was to consist of volunteer troops of various grades and classes, as to whom minute regulations were provided. This was the first step towards the organization of a regular volunteer force in Canada. While it was generally conceded that some legislation on the subject was desirable, the Act as passed was unpalatable to the Opposition, who contended that it was an attempt to create a standing army, one of the greatest curses whereby a free country can be afflicted. Among other objections urged against it were the amount of patronage which it must create, and the great expense which would necessarily be incurred in carrying out its various provisions. It was passed, however, and remained in force about eight years, having in the interim been subjected to certain amendments. An Elective Legislative Council Bill was again passed by the Assembly during this session, only to be again rejected in the Upper House. The Seat of Government question also came before the Assembly, and gave rise to a long and heated debate. A number of Lower Canadian members were desirous of establishing the capital permanently at Quebec, but the general sense of the House was in favour of continuing the alternating system adopted in the autumn of 1849, prior to the removal from Montreal to Toronto. The motion in favour of retaining the Government at Quebec was defeated by a vote of 72 to 41.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company had long had to contend with serious financial and other difficulties. They now applied to Parliament for direct pecuniary assistance. Great blunders would seem to have been committed at the outset of this great enterprise,

more especially in estimating the working expenses, and in the matter of issuing the stock, which had once been quoted at a premium, but was now greatly depressed. The character of the subscription list and the great wealth of the contractors had hitherto enabled the latter to carry on the work of construction without interruption; but a time had now arrived when Provincial aid was the only means of avoiding a stoppage. Such a disaster was to be averted at any reasonable cost, and the Company received a generous grant of £900,000 sterling=$4,500,000. This relief enabled them to tide over the pressure for the time, though their application was repeated, and with success, during the following year, when a Board of Audit was empowered to investigate the Company's affairs, a knowledge of which had theretofore been studiously withheld.

The rest of the legislation of the session may be passed over without comment. The Opposition, though numerically weak, were strong in energy and resource. Mr. Brown continued to speak for the Clear Grits, and he had a most persistent ally in Mr. Mackenzie. Mr. J. S. Macdonald, while acting in concert with Mr. Brown, also had a small following of his own, the most conspicuous member of it being Mr. M. H. Foley, the member for North Waterloo, already mentioned. Mr. A. A. Dorion and Mr. Holton, on behalf of the advanced wing of the Lower Canadian Liberals, from time to time hurled effective diatribes against the Administration. So that the session as a whole was a lively, as well as a productive one. Parliament was prorogued by the Governor on the 30th of May.

During the year 1855 Mr. Hincks severed, for a time, his connection with Canadian affairs. He supported the coalition Government all through the session, and frequently spoke in defence of their policy. Within a few weeks after the prorogation he paid a visit to his native land, and thence passed over to London to confer with Messrs. Baring & Glyn with reference to certain financial projects. During his stay

in London he entered upon arrangements for accepting a position of responsibility in connection with the Grand Trunk Railway; but before completing the negotiation he received from Sir William Molesworth, who was now Colonial Secretary,* the appointment of Governor of Barbadoes and the Windward Islands. Having accepted this high and honourable position, he returned to Canada, and soon afterwards, accompanied by his family, sailed from Boston for the seat of his future Government, whither it is unnecessary that we should follow him. We shall encounter him again before the narrative is brought to a close.

So far as the internal affairs of the Province were concerned, the summer and autumn of 1855 passed uneventfully away. The only public questions which produced any agitation were those respecting the Seat of Government and the elective Legislative Council, and even those were attended with very little excitement. There was exuberant rejoicing over the fall of Sebastopol in September, and the progress of the Eastern conflict to its close was watched in Canada with an absorbing interest. The era of prosperity continued. There was a perceptible tightening in the money market in consequence of the Crimean war, and the timber trade of the Province was still in a very depressed condition; but the season's harvest had been abundant, and the high price of grain and provisions rendered the year one of signal prosperity for the thrifty farmers of Upper Canada. Among the prominent railway developments of 1855 may be mentioned the opening of the Grand Trunk from Montreal to Brockville, of the Great Western from Toronto to Hamilton, and of the extension of the Northern to Collingwood.

* Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet had resigned office at the end of the preceding January, and had been succeeded by a Ministry formed under the auspices of Lord Palmerston, in which the Right Hon. Sidney Herbert held the Colonial Secretaryship. After holding office three weeks, Mr. Herbert resigned, and was succeeded by Lord John Russell, who retained the portfolio until the 13th of July, when he was succeeded by Sir William Molesworth. Sir William died during the following October, and was succeeded by the Hon. Henry Labouchere.

Four sessions of Parliament having by this time been held at Quebec, the Government offices were removed to Toronto during the month of October, and the Governor-General took up his residence there early in November.* Towards the close of the year there were rumours of internal dissensions in the Cabinet, but the advent of 1856 found that body intact, and to all appearance strong in the enjoyment of public confidence. About this time the agitation on what soon after came to be known as the Separate School question began to make itself distinctly heard. The Opposition disapproved of having separate schools provided out of the public chest for the children of Roman Catholics and Protestants; and indeed disapproved of theological teaching in secular schools altogether. The Roman Catholic population believed that theology ought to form an essential part of educational training, and, of course, the only theology they desired to have taught to their offspring was that inculcated by their own priesthood. The Government party, which was largely dependent upon the Lower Canada Roman Catholic vote, were obliged to pay some deference to the more restricted view. They defended the principle that a man who conscientiously believes that religion and education should go hand in hand is entitled to have his convictions respected, and even, to some extent, to have them supported out of those public funds whereof he contributes his share. The cry of the Opposition gained strength with time, and, jointly with that of Representation by Population, was destined to become an important factor in the elections.

* The old structure on the site of the present Government House, on the corner of King and Simcoe Streets, had been fitted up for his Excellency's occupation, and here he abode during his stay in Toronto. It had been known as "Government House" more than forty years before, having been purchased from Chief Justice Elmsley soon after the destruction of the official residence of the Governor by the explosion of the powder magazine during the American invasion of York, in April, 1813. It had successively been the official residence of Francis Gore, Sir Peregrine Maitland, Sir John Colborne, and Sir F. B. Head.

When the second session of the Fifth Parliament was opened at Toronto, on the 15th of February, 1856, the country generally was in a state of profound political calm. All the old vexed questions had been disposed of, and the new ones had not as yet gathered sufficient force to create widespread disturbance in the public mind. Owing to the large increase in the membership of the Assembly since the last meeting of the Legislature at Toronto, a good deal of additional accommodation had become necessary, and the Parliament Buildings on Front Street had recently undergone considerable internal transformation. The space formerly allotted to the public had been encroached upon to such an extent that only a few benches were left at the west entrance for the accommodation of members of the Legislative Council and other privileged visitors. The Council Chamber had been decorated and furnished anew, and presented an aspect of almost imperial splendour, insomuch that the Governor privately remarked that Responsible Government had not obliterated the respect of Canadians for the trappings of sovereignty.* The opening Speech was cautious and non-committal to an uncommon degree, and gave no hint of startling or novel legislation, for the all-sufficient reason that none was contemplated. The Houses were congratulated upon the settlement of the Clergy Reserves and Seigniorial Tenure questions, and upon the general prosperity which prevailed throughout the land. It was intimated that the Legislative Council Bill would again be presented, and that a measure for the organization of a Provincial Police was in contemplation. There were also hints of legal reforms, a general incorporation Act, and an Act respecting juvenile offenders. These, in addition to a few generalities of little moment, made up

* Sir Edmund Head was at this time in his fifty-first year. A contemporary account describes him as of full height and habit, with a rather firm, not to say stern expression of countenance. His complexion was somewhat darkened by the use of nitrate of silver as a remedy for epilepsy, to which he was subject.

the sum total of the ministerial programme, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

Various amendments, of no historical significance, were proposed to the Address in Reply, but the Opposition were not strong enough numerically to do more than retard public business. After being under discussion for more than a week, the various clauses of the ministerial Address were carried by sweeping majorities. In the course of the debate an extraordinary passage of arms came off between Attorney-General Macdonald and Mr. Brown. The latter was the most vehement, and in some respects the most effective speaker in the Assembly. While by no means graceful in his bearing or eloquent in his diction, he spoke with such an air of deep and earnest conviction that, on any question in which he was greatly interested, it was impossible to listen to him unmoved. His torrents of invective and objurgation were at times overwhelming. On the night of Tuesday, the 26th of February, while the debate on the Address was still in progress, he was taunted with having changed his political views since the last general election, when he had, both personally and in his newspaper, vigorously supported persons whom he now assailed. The reference was specially to the elections of Sir Allan MacNab, John A. Macdonald and Mr. Cayley, all of whom had received the *Globe's* support in opposition to candidates favourable to Mr. Hincks's policy. It must be admitted that Mr. Brown's course in this respect had not been marked by that perfect consistency on which he was wont to pique himself; although, on the other hand, it was legitimately open to him to argue that his change of base had been produced by the altered political relations of Messieurs MacNab, Macdonald and Cayley, who had coalesced with persons whose policy they had previously denounced. But inconsistency was of all charges the most intolerable to the mind of Mr. Brown, and upon being taken to task on that score by some of the speakers

on the ministerial side his indignation knew no bounds. He had not been speaking five minutes ere he had succeeded in lashing himself into a white heat. He indulged in a tremendous onslaught on what he characterized as the kaleidoscopic politics of some of the members of the Government; and he specially instanced the case of the Attorney-General West and the Postmaster-General. Anger begets anger; and Mr. Macdonald, stung by the cutting words as they poured hot from the speaker's lips, was roused to a condition of temper which impelled him to forget the pleasant urbanity which generally marked his demeanour, alike to friends and foes. When he rose to reply to Mr. Brown it was evident that he was labouring under wild excitement. He launched forth into a tirade which electrified the House, and caused even the least scrupulous of Parliamentary sharpshooters to stand aghast. He accused the member for Lambton of having falsified testimony, suborned convict witnesses, and obtained the pardon of murderers in order to induce them to give false evidence. These grave delinquencies were alleged to have been committed by Mr. Brown while acting as Secretary to a Commission appointed in 1848 to investigate certain alleged abuses in connection with the Provincial Penitentiary at Kingston. Such foul charges had never before been laid against any member on the floor of a Canadian Parliament, and the astonished legislators gazed in one another's faces in a state of mingled bewilderment and incredulity. When Mr. Macdonald took his seat Mr. Brown once more arose, tremulous with excitement, to repel the accusations made against him. No one who knew the member for Lambton would have expected him, under such circumstances, to carefully choose his words; and in good sooth he spoke in language akin to that employed by Faulconbridge to the Dauphin of France. He was frequently interrupted by Mr. Macdonald, whose impassioned and spasmodic utterances seemed to have been culled from the Athanasian Creed. Like Roland and Sir Leoline,

"Each spake words of high disdain."

The excitement became general, and rose to fever heat. The very atmosphere of the Assembly seemed to be charged with electricity, and the Speaker twice called the offenders to order. Suddenly each of the Parliamentary gladiators seemed to realize the position in which he stood, and the storm subsided as quickly as it had arisen. Mr. Brown almost immediately afterwards concluded his remarks, which he was permitted to do without further interruption. He contented himself with declaring that the charges had not a vestige of truth in them; that he had taken down the Attorney-General's words; and that he would hold him responsible for them. He also announced that he would on the following day move for a Committee of Inquiry. Then he resumed his seat. It was felt that calm deliberation was for the nonce out of the question, and the House broke up for the day.

Until the meeting of the House on the following afternoon, nothing was talked of but the extraordinary ebullition of the night before. Mr. Brown, according to his announcement, moved for a Committee, and the debate on the motion occupied the greater part of the sitting. The Attorney-General, in the course of the discussion, admitted that he had spoken under great excitement, and that he had no personal knowledge as to the truth or falsity of the charges he had made. He justified his attack, however, upon the ground that his feelings had been grievously wounded by the assaults made upon him by Mr. Brown, and that his information as to that gentleman's conduct as a member of the Penitentiary Commission had been derived from sources which he was compelled to regard as trustworthy. The Committee was granted, and sat at intervals throughout the greater part of the session. The seven gentlemen composing it were unable to come to a unanimous decision, and finally handed in two separate reports. That of the majority was a non-committal document which could not have been very satisfactory to either of the persons chiefly con-

cerned. It did not find Mr. Brown guilty of any of the offences with which he had been charged, but on the other hand it did not exonerate him. With respect to the charge of falsifying evidence, it was found that the Penitentiary Commissioners, when compiling their report from the mass of evidence taken, had omitted certain passages favourable to the defence, and that, to such an extent, there had been falsification. This, however, which might fairly be attributed to an error of judgment, was the act of the Commissioners as a whole, and not of Mr. Brown only.* The charge of having suborned witnesses was wholly unsustained by the evidence, and that of having procured the pardon of murderers was attempted to be sustained by such testimony as did not call for any serious attempt at rebuttal. The minority report embodied a total exculpation of Mr. Brown. The presentation of the two reports to the Assembly gave rise to protracted debates, and Parliament was prorogued without any decisive action having been taken in the matter. Its consideration was never resumed.

The personal hostility engendered at this time between Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Brown was never entirely allayed. Lapse of time doubtless did something to mitigate the rigour of their impressions, and when accident or public business brought them into personal relations with each other they were mutually able to maintain a semblance of frigid courtesy and respect. Years afterwards, as will be seen, when they had both grown older, and (presumably) wiser, they agreed to sink their differences for the common welfare of the country; but the temporary peace patched up between them was solely for the accomplishment of a special public object, and had little or no effect in obliterating the memory of their long-standing personal feud.

*"How far Mr. Brown, who conducted the affairs of the Commission, and in fact was the Secretary also, was to blame separately from his colleagues, your Committee express no opinion."—*See* the Report.

The altercation between Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Brown took place, as above stated, on the 26th of February, when the session was only a few days old. It proved to be only the first of a succession of unedifying scenes which marked the proceedings in the Assembly during the session of 1856. Personal allusions, and even personal insults, erelong came to be freely bandied across the floor of the House, and on several occasions the Speaker had to put forth the weight of his authority to prevent actual breaches of the peace. On the 16th of April, during a debate on the Seat of Government question, a most unseemly passage of wordy warfare took place between Attorney-General Macdonald and Mr. Rankin,* member for Essex. Some very un-Parliamentary language having been used on both sides, it was anticipated that the fracas must inevitably end in a personal encounter at ten paces. It was in contemplation to place both the belligerents in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, but after a long discussion on the subject in the House, they were induced to pledge themselves not to push the matter any farther, and there it was allowed to drop.

But quarrels between political foes were not the only disturbing elements that occurred to interrupt the harmony of the Legislature during this stormy session. It soon became apparent that there was not perfect unanimity between the members of the Cabinet, and that the ante-sessional rumours as to internal troubles had not been without foundation. The truth of the matter was that the Liberal-Conservative party, more especially that portion which had once owned allegiance to Mr. Hincks, were dissatisfied with the leadership of Sir Allan MacNab, and desired to see a younger and more energetic man installed in his place. There could be no difference of opinion as to who the successor should be. Mr. Macdonald was

* Mr. Rankin had recently received from the Government the appointment of Colonel Commandant of the Western Militia District. He was, and is, commonly known as *Colonel* Rankin.

the ablest Parliamentarian in the Liberal-Conservative ranks, and was looked up to as their leading spirit. As for Sir Allan, he had never possessed abilities of a high order, and had only been permitted to retain the leadership up to this time in consequence of his seniority, and his long and unquestionable fidelity to his party. Moreover, infirmities begotten of old age and a too generous diet had of late given unmistakable evidences of their presence. He suffered from excruciating attacks of gout, and was sometimes compelled to be absent from his place in the Assembly and in the Executive Council. During the progress of the session his absences became so frequent as to prove a source of embarrassment to the Ministry of which he was the head. Towards the end of March a caucus of the more advanced Ministerialists was accordingly held, and it was resolved that Mr. Macdonald should be leader. This step, it was believed, would induce Sir Allan's immediate resignation; but it erelong appeared that the belief was too sanguine for the facts. For a time, indeed, it seemed that the cabal had accomplished nothing beyond a serious breach in their party. Sir Allan was highly indignant at the means which had been resorted to to undermine him, and denounced Mr. Macdonald in terms which must in all charity be at least in part attributed to the grievous malady with which he was afflicted—a malady which is a severe tax even upon the most equable temper. He felt strong in his position as Premier, and refused to resign at the bidding of anybody. He well knew that a Premier is liable to dismissal at the hands of the Governor alone, and that his followers had no direct means of unseating him. Such of his colleagues as were hostile to him might resign office, and thus bring on a ministerial crisis; but he would then be left free to reconstruct his Cabinet, and might possibly succeed in doing so without their aid. In that case they would have simply turned themselves out of office, for it might safely be taken for granted that Sir Allan would not reinstate any one of them.

The cabal, however, proved too much for the valetudinarian knight. All the ministerial press, with the exception of the Hamilton *Spectator* and the Toronto *Colonist*, opened fire upon him. He was informed, in no mealy-mouthed phrases, that his services as leader of his party were no longer either necessary or desirable. When he perceived that his day was over, he tried to compromise matters by having his friend, Mr. John Hillyard Cameron, installed in the leadership, instead of Mr. Macdonald. Mr. Cameron was very willing to have greatness thrust upon him, and seconded the efforts of his leader. While these machinations were in progress the ministerial party were much disorganized, and were in sooth in a critical position, as the Opposition failed not to take advantage of every turn of the Parliamentary wheel in their favour, and thundered away night after night at the Treasury benches with ceaseless importunity. Suddenly, and not without surprise, the Government found themselves defeated on a public question of some importance, arising out of what was known as the Corrigan murder. On the 17th of October, 1855, a Protestant named Robert Corrigan had been murdered by a crowd of ruffians assembled at a cattle fair, in the parish of St. Sylvestre, in the county of Lotbinière, Lower Canada. In the following February Richard Kelly and six other Irish Roman Catholics were placed on trial for the murder. The trial took place in the Court of Queen's Bench, at Quebec. The jury was entirely composed of Roman Catholics, and Judge Duval, who presided, was of the same faith. The trial lasted some days, and a mass of evidence was taken. There could not well have been a clearer case, and there surely could have been no doubt in the mind of any one who heard the evidence as to the guilt of the prisoners. The murder was attended by circumstances of the most revolting brutality, and one cannot read the report of the trial, even at this distance of time, without horror and disgust. Yet, in defiance of the plainest evidence, the jury returned a verdict of "Not Guilty," and the

prisoners were acquitted. Such a miscarriage of justice might well create a sensation. Throughout Western Canada the outcry was loud and deep. It was said that there was no law for the Protestants of the Lower Province, and that their lives were at the mercy of their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. The press, headed by the *Globe*, took the matter up with tremendous fervour, clamouring for the formation of a new party to guard the interests of Protestants, and to oppose Romish domination. The excitement penetrated to all classes of society, and the public mind had not been so stirred since the debates on the Rebellion Losses Bill. On the night of Friday, the 7th of March, Mr. John Hillyard Cameron brought the matter before the Assembly by moving for an address to the Governor for the production of a copy of Judge Duval's charge, which, as Mr. Cameron alleged, "contained statements which could hardly have been made by any man who had anything like a fair acquaintance with the manner in which the criminal law ought to be administered." Such a very positive expression as this, emanating from a gentleman who was perhaps the ablest criminal lawyer ever known to the Canadian bar, produced a decided effect upon the House. The Ministry found themselves on the horns of an unpleasant dilemma. The Lower Canadian members to whom they looked for support were opposed to any reflection on Judge Duval's wisdom and integrity. The Upper Canadians, Conservatives as well as Reformers, were almost to a man in favour of Mr. Cameron's motion. The Ministry, after deliberation, refused to sanction the proceeding, and took the ground that to order the production of Judge Duval's charge would be to infringe upon the independence of the judiciary. The motion came up on the night of the 10th—three days after its first introduction—and after being fully debated on both sides, was carried against the Ministry by a vote of 48 to 44. All the Upper Canadian ministerialists voted for the motion, with the exception of Dr. Clarke, member for North Wellington, and Mr.

James Ross, member for East Northumberland. This was an unmistakable defeat. Attorney-General Drummond hurriedly moved an adjournment of the House.

Next day, after the transaction of some routine business, Mr. Drummond, on behalf of the Government, asked for a further adjournment for two days, in order that Ministers might have time to deliberate upon what was to be done under the circumstances. He announced that the address involved in Mr. Cameron's motion had not been presented to his Excellency, and gave notice that he would move to rescind it. The interval before the next meeting of the House was employed by the Government in marshalling their forces, and in bringing into line such recalcitrant members as were accessible to ministerial influence. In spite of all that could be done, however, it was brought home to the Government that on the motion to rescind they would inevitably be beaten. It was therefore arranged that they should agree to present the address to his Excellency, and that a friendly member should move a vote of confidence in the Ministry. This plan was carried out, and it was made apparent that the Government were supported by a majority; whereupon Mr. Drummond announced that under the circumstances they did not feel called upon to resign. This ended the crisis for the time. The address was duly presented to the Governor, who, by the advice of his Ministers, responded in a message to the effect that Judge Duval's charge was not in his possession; that it could not be assumed to exist; that even if it did exist the Governor had not power to enforce its production; and that to call a judge to account in the manner indicated would be "at least an evasion" of the spirit of the Act to secure the independence of the Judges of Lower Canada.

But the position of the Ministry was far from satisfactory, and some change was imperative. They never entirely recovered from the effects of the hostile vote on the Corrigan matter. On the

18th of April the Hon. John Ross resigned the Speakership of the Legislative Council, and ceased to be a member of the Government. The reason assigned by him for his resignation was the dissatisfaction expressed by the Reform ministerial members of Upper Canada at the existing state of affairs in the Government. A deputation had recently waited upon him on behalf of those members, and had notified him that they must no longer be depended upon to support Government measures. The coalition, they declared, had been formed for the specific object of settling the Clergy Reserves and Seigniorial Tenure questions. That object having now been accomplished, they could see no reason for continuing an alliance with such a scion of the Family Compact as Sir Allan MacNab, who, they alleged, had never been an efficient leader, even when he was in good health, and who now, by reason of his frequent illness, had become a mere drag upon public business. With such a man at their head, they averred, no Administration could prove itself equal to the exigencies of the times. Of course, Mr. Ross, in his explanations in the Upper House, did not enter into all these details, but contented himself with merely stating that he had resigned because the confidence of the Upper Canadian Reformers had been withdrawn. He was succeeded in the Speakership of the Council by Colonel Taché, who also retained the post of Receiver-General. Mr. J. C. Morrison was at the same time admitted to a seat in the Cabinet without portfolio. Having always been identified with the same political party as Mr. Ross, it was believed by the Ministry that Mr. Morrison's admission to their Council Board would, so to speak, restore the balance of power, and allay the dissatisfaction of the Upper Canadian Reformers. Public opinion, however, was very much divided, and while (as was ultimately proved) Mr. Morrison's entrance into the Ministry was approved by a majority of his constituents in Niagara, there were many Reformers throughout the Province who found fault with him.

Early in May a rumour began to get abroad that there was trouble in the Lower Canada section of the ministerial camp, and that Mr. Cauchon had threatened resignation. The ground of offence in his case was the North Shore Railway. The inhabitants of the north shore of the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal were desirous of having a railway through their territory, and extending thence westward up the Ottawa. The lavish Government aid extended to the Grand Trunk led them to hope for similar liberality towards their own cherished enterprise. Mr. Cauchon had strongly sympathized with this view of the matter, and had held out high expectations to his followers. In order to justify these expectations he had put forth the weight of his power in the Ministry to forward his object; but, notwithstanding his urgency, he had been unable to obtain ministerial concurrence in his views. He then became restive, and threatened resignation. As he had a following of eighteen members, such a threat was too serious to be disregarded, and he was permitted to introduce and carry through a measure whereby four millions of acres of ungranted lands of the Crown were set apart, to be handed over to the railway company so soon as at least twenty-five miles of the contemplated road should be completed. Mr. Cauchon's secession was thus averted for the time, but, as will hereafter be seen, for the time only.

Meantime Sir Allan continued to be laid up with gout, and the ministerial cabal from time to time renewed its operations against him. But he still felt strongly entrenched, and stood upon his rights. He could not be summarily turned adrift. Evidently the only means of disposing of him was to compel his resignation, and the prospect of accomplishing this feat was not hopeful. But the fates were propitious to his foes. Reference has been made to the Seat of Government question. The perambulating system had not been found satisfactory. It was attended with much expense and in-

convenience, and would sooner or later have to be relinquished in favour of a permanent capital. On the 14th of April Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald brought the matter before the Assembly in the form of a motion in favour of discontinuing the alternate system. The motion was carried, and on the 16th, after a long and heated discussion, the House resolved, by a vote of 64 to 56, that after the year 1859 Quebec should be the permanent capital of Canada. Of course, nearly all the Upper Canadian members were dissatisfied with this arrangement. As events turned out, however, the decision afforded the ministerial cabal the desired opportunity for displacing their chief. On the 14th of May, when certain supplementary estimates for the year had been brought down and placed before the Assembly, it appeared that there was an item of £50,000 for the erection of public buildings at Quebec. Mr. Brown moved that it was inexpedient to vote this sum for the purpose specified. His motion was objected to in point of form, and the objection was sustained by the Speaker. Several other motions to a similar purport shared the same fate. The Ministry, however, suggested that the Opposition might, if so disposed, bring the question before the House by a direct vote of want of confidence. The suggestion was promptly acted upon by Mr. Papin, member for L'Assomption. When that gentleman's motion came up, on the following day, Mr. Holton, with Mr. Papin's consent, moved an amendment to the same effect, but somewhat more comprehensive in its terms.* The discussion on this amendment, which began on the 15th of the month, lasted till late on the night of Tuesday, the 20th, when, after a continuous sitting of thirty-two hours, the amendment was defeated by a vote of 70 to 47. But on analyzing the votes it was found that there were no fewer than

* Mr. Holton's motion was as follows: "That the course of the Administration with reference to the question of the Seat of Government, and other important public questions, has disappointed the just expectations of the great majority of the people of this Province." *See* Assembly Journals, 15th May, 1856.

thirty-three Upper Canadians among the minority, whereas only twenty-seven from that section of the Province had voted with the Government. The Opposition, then, had defeated the Government by an Upper Canadian majority of six; and only five Upper Canadian members were absent from the vote. This raised a direct issue as to the necessity for a double majority. That question had never been definitively settled. It had been first mooted during the old days of Executive irresponsibility, but had never obtained acquiescence from Reformers, nor even from the Conservatives as a whole. In principle it was foreign to the constitution, and could not be supported even as a mere theory.* Upper and Lower Canada were united as one Province, with a single Parliament legislating for the whole. It was sufficient if the Government received the support of a majority in the Assembly, without regard to the particular locality represented by the supporters. A double majority had not been regarded as a necessity by Mr. Baldwin, as had been sufficiently proved by the very factor which various Canadian writers have put forward as a proof that he *did* so regard it; namely, the circumstances of his resignation in 1851. It has repeatedly been asserted that his resignation was due to his adherence to the double majority principle; whereas, if he had regarded such a principle as binding he would not only have resigned himself, but would have approved of the resignation of his colleagues from Upper Canada.† But, so far from approving their resignation, he strongly urged them to remain in office. The motives which really swayed Mr. Baldwin at this juncture have been sufficiently explained in a former chapter.‡ That Mr.

* See the remarks of the Hon. J. A. Macdonald in the Assembly, on Friday, June 3rd, 1856, as reported in the newspapers of the time.

† Mr. J. S. Macdonald seems to have either misunderstood or affected to misunderstand Mr. Baldwin's position. See the series of resolutions moved by him in the Assembly, June 3rd, 1856.

‡ *Ante*, pp. 236, 237.

Hincks did not regard a double majority as an essential had been established by the fact of his yielding to Mr. Baldwin's representations, and retaining office when his leader resigned. Advocates of the other side of the question, however, were provided with a strong practical argument. The fact was undeniable that the Government of Canada could not be satisfactorily carried on by means of a majority of one section and a minority of the other. An agitation for a repeal of the Union would be the inevitable outcome of such a proceeding. The question, then, was an open one, and the Ministry, during the crisis of 1856, were free to act as to them might seem best. Their Chief was suffering from one of his sharpest attacks, and was not in a position to either direct or interfere with their deliberations. He seemed to have been, by a special dispensation, delivered over to their hands. They concluded to uphold the double majority principle, and thus, by the only means in their power, get rid of Sir Allan, who, like a veritable Old Man of the Sea, hung like an incubus upon the ministerial neck. They felt that, divested of their head, they would be able to command a safe majority in the Assembly. They were now convinced that in the event of their resignation Sir Allan by himself could do nothing, in which case the Gove nor would be constrained to have recourse to them. They would be able to reconstruct the Government without the gallant knight from Hamilton, and would be relieved from much of the embarrassment which beset them.

These projects were successfully carried out. Not, however, without protest on the part of Sir Allan. Messrs. Spence and Morrison, the Upper Canadian Reform representatives in the Ministry, having notified his Excellency of their intention of immediately resigning, their example was followed by Attorney-General Macdonald and Inspector-General Cayley. The Governor accordingly signified to Sir Allan and the other members his conviction that it would be impossible to replace those gentlemen "in such a manner

as to maintain the efficiency of the Council, on the principle on which it had originally been formed." Sir Allan was at no loss to understand the broad hint conveyed in this intimation. Neither had he any difficulty in understanding the tactics of his Upper Canadian colleagues. But he saw no means of either ignoring the one or counteracting the other. He was racked with pain and undermined in health; "an old man, broken with the storms of state,"—and hot podagra. He made the best of the situation, and submitted. On the 21st of May the Governor was apprised that Sir Allan and the other members of the Council, "though not recognizing a sectional majority as a sufficient reason for a change of Government," yet considered that they had no alternative but to place their offices at his Excellency's disposal. Next day the Governor accepted the resignations, to take effect from the appointment of new Councillors.* He then applied to Colonel Taché, as the senior Executive Councillor, and entrusted him with the formation of a Ministry, a task which was soon accomplished. All the readjustments were finally complete on the 24th—Her Majesty's birthday—and on that date the Taché-Macdonald Government, as it is called, came into power. It contained only two new members, Messieurs Philip Michael Matthew Scott Vankoughnet and Timothy Lee Terrill. The latter was a lawyer by profession, and a man of average abilities. He had been a member of the old British party in Lower Canada, and in 1849 had been connected with the annexation movement. He had first entered political life in November, 1852, when he had been elected to the Assembly for Stanstead, which constituency he had represented ever since. He now succeeded Mr. Cartier

* In the memorandum of acceptance the Governor expressly stated that he did not admit or sanction the doctrine of a double or sectional majority as necessary to a Government in Canada. He further referred to the doctrine as "irrational," and one which, if carried out, "might involve the consequence of a Ministry being obliged to resign, although the party by whom they had been defeated did not and could not possess the confidence of the Legislative Assembly."

as Provincial Secretary, and he was the only person of British stock in the Lower Canadian section of the new Cabinet. Mr. Vankoughnet, the other new member, was a much abler man, though he was at this time devoid of political experience, and had never even been a candidate for a seat in Parliament. He was of German descent, but a Canadian by birth, having been born at Cornwall, Upper Canada, in 1823. He was at this time one of the leaders of the Upper Canadian bar, and resided at Toronto, where he enjoyed a large and lucrative practice, and was known as one of the most brilliant men in the profession. In 1850 he had been appointed a Queen's Counsel by the second Lafontaine-Baldwin Government, and as he had always been identified with the Conservative party, the appointment had justly been regarded as a tribute to his professional standing alone. Some of his contemporaries have been known to say that if his industry had been commensurate with his general parts, Philip Vankoughnet would have been the ablest lawyer that ever figured at the Canadian bar. He was a fast friend of Mr. J. A. Macdonald, and it was at that gentleman's urgent solicitation that he now consented to renounce his exceptionally profitable law practice and accept a seat in the reconstructed Administration. He succeeded to the place of Sir Allan MacNab, and became President of the Council and head of the Bureau of Agriculture. He made no attempt to obtain a seat in the Assembly, but in the following November was elected to the Legislative Council for the Rideau Division, under the new Act to be presently referred to. We may here anticipate matters so far as to say that notwithstanding his great abilities he did not take very kindly to political life, of which he had had no previous experience; nor did he ever become popular as a Cabinet Minister. The duties of a Department were not congenial to him, and he doubtless felt himself to be somewhat out of his proper sphere. Upon his election to the Upper House he became the leader of the Government party there,

and was conspicuous for fluency of speech and a pleasing manner, though he was not, and did not aspire to be, a Parliamentary orator. His highest honours were reserved for the last seven years of his life, during which he filled with singular ability the dignified position of Chancellor of Upper Canada.

Except Sir Allan MacNab, the only member of the late Administration who did not hold office in the new one was Mr. Drummond. That gentleman refused to acquiesce in the arrangements unless upon condition that he should be leader of the ministerial party in the Assembly. To this proviso Attorney-General Macdonald, who was the real, though not the nominal head of the Administration, was not disposed to assent, he having reserved the leadership of the Lower House for himself. Mr. Drummond accordingly withdrew, and was succeeded as Attorney-General East by Mr. Cartier, late Provincial Secretary. The Speakership of the Legislative Council was retained by Colonel Taché, but he ceased to be Receiver-General, that portfolio being assumed by Mr. J. C. Morrison. Messieurs Cauchon and Lemieux retained their respective portfolios of Crown Lands and Public Works, and Messieurs (J. A.) Macdonald, Cayley and Spence continued respectively to be Attorney-General West, Inspector-General and Postmaster-General. The two Solicitors-General, Messieurs Henry Smith and Dunbar Ross, also retained their offices.

Such was the composition of the Taché-Macdonald Administration of 1856. As already stated, its real head was not Colonel Taché, but John A. Macdonald, who at last found himself in the position of Upper Canadian leader. Thenceforward down to the present day he has been perhaps the most conspicuous figure in the political life of this country. He had travelled steadily towards the goal at which he had arrived, and his ambition and force of character had proved too much for Sir Allan MacNab, who from that time forward ceased to exercise any important influence over public affairs.

On Friday, the 23rd of May: two days after his resignation, and one day before the ministerial arrangements had been definitely settled: Sir Allan went, or rather was carried, down to his place in the Assembly, for the purpose of making the explanations naturally to be looked for from him under the circumstances. He reached the House a few minutes after the Speaker had taken the chair. He was swathed in flannel, and his countenance bore unmistakable traces of the acute bodily agony through which he had recently passed. Two stout serving-men carried him between them into the House, and placed him in the chair which he had of old been wont to occupy. The members, irrespective of party, sounded indubitable notes of welcome, and thereby signified their congratulations upon his convalescence. He received them with a kindly smile, but it was evident that he was buoyed up beyond his strength for the occasion, and that he was not even entirely free from physical pain. It had come to be generally known that his anger was hotly kindled against the Attorney-General West, and an exciting collision was looked forward to when the ministerial tactics should be laid bare to the Assembly. Much to the disappointment of those members who enjoyed such scenes, neither Mr. Macdonald nor any other member of the Cabinet was present, nor was any one there to represent them, except Solicitor-General Smith. After the routine business had been disposed of, every one looked towards Sir Allan, who at once responded to the implied appeal. Being unable to stand erect without great discomfort, he craved the Speaker's permission to retain his seat while making his remarks. The permission was of course granted, and thus, seated in his chair, he proceeded to say a few words, which, however, threw no light on the ministerial changes. He remarked that he had left his room at great inconvenience for the express purpose of making the explanations which the Assembly had a right to demand of him, but that while on the way he had encountered Attorney-General Drummond, who had

informed him that his colleagues did not intend to be in their places in the House until the following Monday. Under these circumstances he felt it right to defer his explanations until that date. "I will only add," concluded Sir Allan, "my great regret that the state of my health has prevented my discharging my duty during the present session of Parliament. I have been a member of this House twenty-six years, and during all that period I have not been so long absent as during the present session. I think the people of this country will receive that from a man of my age as a sufficient excuse. I shall endeavour to be in my place next Monday to meet those gentlemen, for the purpose of making such statements as I think it becomes me to make; and to the people I confidently appeal for their verdict in the course I have taken. If I am supported by their voice, I shall feel that I am right. If condemned, I am ready to retire into private life—and indeed, perhaps, I am now fit for little else." There is no reason to suppose that these closing words, which were spoken in a breaking and tremulous voice, had been premeditated, or that they were intended as an *argumentum ad misericordiam;* but they certainly produced a marked effect upon all who heard them. There is indeed something indescribably touching in the simply-worded peroration, coming from such a man, and under such circumstances. The effect of the appeal was not confined to members of the House. It was more or less felt throughout the whole of the Upper Province, and Sir Allan received many expressions of warm sympathy from persons with whom he had very little in common except his humanity. Taken all and all, the scene is unique in our Parliamentary history. Its earlier features—the carrying into the House bandaged in flannel, the bowed frame, the shattered constitution, the pallid countenance indicative of past suffering—insensibly remind one of the famous episode in the life of a much greater man than Sir Allan: the episode in the English Parliament in 1778, when Chatham went down to make his last speech in the House of Lords. Happily, however, the parallel does not extend to the concluding

scenes. Sir Allan did not fall back in the arms of his friends: first, because, as has been seen, he sat in his chair, and ran no risk of falling; and second, because, unlike Lord Chatham, he rallied from the physical prostration wherewith he had been afflicted, and survived for about six years, during which his name was more or less frequently in men's mouths, though he never regained the political ascendency that had once been his.

The ministerial explanations were made at the appointed time—Monday, the 26th. It is unnecessary that we should linger over them. Suffice it to say that they proved satisfactory to a majority of the Assembly, and that a motion of want of confidence moved by Mr. Dorion was negatived, after a hot debate extending over several days, by a majority of four. The Upper Canadian majority against the Government, however, was considerably increased. Here was a formidable dilemma, for the recent resignations had proceeded upon the ground that a double-majority, if not absolutely essential, was at all events a matter of primary importance. With what consistency could the Government now retain office, with the general majority in their favour reduced from 23 to 4, and with the Upper Canadian majority against them increased nearly threefold? The Premier, Colonel Taché, hinted at a second resignation. He was however overborne by his colleagues, who grounded their determination to remain in office upon the inexpediency of delaying the public business. Much of the legislation of the session was still incomplete, and it was certain that the public interests would suffer in the event of further complications in the Cabinet. These arguments prevailed. Affairs settled down into their normal condition, and the ordinary legislative business was proceeded with. Throughout the rest of the session the Government were able to carry their measures by fair majorities.

The most important statutory measure of the session was the Act respecting the Legislative Council, which was almost identical with that passed by the Assembly and rejected in the Upper House during the previous session. It enacted that the existing members should

continue to hold their seats during life, as provided by the Imperial Act of 1840. Every future member was to be elected for a term of eight years by the suffrages of the people, the qualification for voters being the same as that of voters for members of the Assembly. The Province, for the purposes of the Act, was divided into forty-eight electoral divisions, twenty-four for each section. The elections were not to be simultaneous, but biennial, twelve members being returned at each contest: that is to say, twelve members in 1856, twelve in 1858, a similar number in 1860, and in each second year thereafter. Such was the system introduced by the Elective Legislative Council Act of 1856, which continued in operation until Confederation, when it was abandoned in favour of the old system of appointments for life. The only material modification occurred in 1860, when the Speaker—who, under the Act of 1856, was appointed by the Governor—was made elective by the members of the Council.

Such a measure was certain to encounter opposition from the Conservative element in the Upper House: the element which had already more than once prevented it from becoming law. It however received the sanction of a large majority of that body, and in due course received the royal assent. The first elections under it were held in the autumn of the same year, when, as has been seen, Mr. Vankoughnet was returned for the electoral division of Rideau.*

The session adjourned on the 1st of July, after passing 140 Acts, among which may be mentioned that known as the Common Law Procedure Act of 1856. It was an adaptation to local requirements of an English statute regulating the practice of the Courts of Common Law, and related to Upper Canada only. The Bill respecting Provincial Police, after being introduced, and to some extent discussed, was abandoned in consequence of its unpopularity.

* Colonel Prince, who has disappeared from the narrative for some time past, was at the same elections returned to the Legislative Council for the Western Division. During the preceding two years he had no seat in the Legislature, his career in the Assembly having closed with the Fourth Parliament in 1854.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

L'ANNÉE TERRIBLE.

"The reaction which commenced this year was in part the inevitable result of undue speculation. Public improvements had been made in advance of the population, the wealth, and the commerce of the country; and the increase, in the progress of time, of these elements of national greatness, could alone restore the healthy equilibrium of the financial condition of the body politic."—MACMULLEN'S *History of Canada*, p. 539.

BEYOND those already mentioned, there were no political events of much importance in Canada during the year 1856, which, after the prorogation, glided calmly to its close. Meanwhile the work of railway construction went rapidly on. In July the Grand Trunk was opened from Toronto to Guelph, and in November from Guelph to Stratford. Before the close of the year there was direct communication all the way from Montreal to Sarnia. The Buffalo and Lake Huron — now incorporated with the Grand Trunk — was opened through to Stratford in December. The year also beheld the close of the Crimean war. Peace was proclaimed in the spring, and in July the Crimea was evacuated by the allied troops. The Chinese outbreak occurred several months later. These events were watched with sympathetic interest in Canada, where, as a result of the Eastern complications, there had for two years been a steadily increasing tightness of the money market. Nor were Canadians devoid of topics of interest nearer home. It was in 1856 that the public mind first became thoroughly aroused on the subject of the Hudson's Bay Company's possessions in the North-West. It was then that Cana-

dians for the first time awoke to the importance of bringing about a union with those little-known territories, and that a general agitation was set on foot with a view to breaking up the monopoly that had existed for nearly two hundred years. Among those who gave a decided impetus to the movement a conspicuous place must in justice be assigned to Mr. William McDougall, who has already been referred to in connection with *The North American* newspaper. That journalistic enterprise had come to an end, *The North American* having been absorbed by *The Globe*, and Mr. McDougall himself having joined the editorial staff of the last-named journal. He was a trenchant writer, and took up the question of the North-West with much enthusiasm in the columns of *The Globe*. The movement steadily gained strength,* and finally resulted, as every Canadian knows, in the destruction of the monopoly, and in the absorption of the North-West into the Dominion of Canada. It will be sufficient in this place to add that the agitation made such rapid progress that communications with the Hudson's Bay Company were set on foot before the close of the year, with a view to the acquirement of the territory on behalf of Canada; and that early in 1857 Chief Justice Draper was sent over to England to represent the Province in the negotiations. The chief local topics of political discussion were those relating to separate schools and representation by population: themes which furnished the newspapers with never-failing matter for acrid comment. In January of the new year a great gathering of Upper Canadian Reformers was held at Toronto for the purpose of organizing a united Oppo-

* The movement, however, had to encounter very strong opposition from many representatives of the Canadian press, who did their utmost to stem the current of popular opinion, and to depreciate the value of the territory. Some of those representatives wrote what they honestly believed to be true. Others merely wrote in the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the light of our present knowledge, it is refreshing to read in *The Montreal Transcript* of twenty-six years ago that the climate of the North-West is "altogether unfavourable to the growth of grain," and that the summer is so short as to make it difficult to "mature even a small potato or a cabbage."

sition to the Government, and the two questions above referred to were made distinct planks in the platform. Upon the whole, however, the Government advanced in popular favour during the recess, and when they next met the Houses, on the 26th of February (1857), they felt a well-grounded confidence in their ability to carry through the session in safety.

The opening Speech was of unusual length, but it contained nothing of historical importance except a reference to a communication received from the Colonial Secretary, announcing that Her Majesty's Government had determined to submit "certain questions connected with the affairs and territory of the Hudson's Bay Company" to the consideration of a Committee of the House of Commons. In connection with the same subject, reference was made to Mr. Draper's mission to England, to "watch over the interests of the Province." Among several amendments moved in the Assembly to the Address in Reply was one by Mr. A. A. Dorion, expressive of regret that His Excellency should have been advised to despatch to England, on a mission relating to the Hudson's Bay Territory, a gentleman who occupied a judicial position in the Province. In the course of the ensuing debate the Government were loudly censured by the Opposition for taking so momentous a step without first submitting the matter to Parliament. The Ministry defended their action upon the ground that Parliament had not been in session at the time of Mr. Draper's appointment. The case, it was said, had been urgent, and to have delayed the sending of an emissary until his appointment could be sanctioned by Parliament would have been prejudicial to Canadian interests, inasmuch as the Committee of the House of Commons would in that case have been some time in session before the emissary could reach his destination. It was further contended that Mr. Draper's knowledge and talents were such as to specially fit him to represent the interests of Canada in such a contingency. Several Conserva-

tives spoke and voted with the Opposition on the motion, but the Government were strong enough to override the defection, and Mr. Dorion's amendment was lost by a vote of 52 to 30. In the Upper House the Address was carried by 16 to 6.

With the exception of a brief adjournment during the Easter holidays, Parliament sat continuously until the 10th of June. During the interval no fewer than 227 Acts were added to the statute book. Several of these were of such importance as to deserve special mention.

Second to no Act of the session in practical utility was one making provision for a codification of the Civil Laws and Laws of Procedure in Lower Canada. The system of jurisprudence in that section of the Province was largely founded upon that of Imperial Rome, as modified in mediæval France, and imported by the French colonists into Canada under the title of the Custom of Paris. This mixed system was supplemented by certain edicts of the French Kings and colonial Intendants promulgated before the Conquest, and by divers Ordinances introduced by successive Governors during the interval between the Conquest and the passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791. In addition to these, there were the Provincial statutes. It is scarcely to be wondered at if the Lower Canadian system of laws, with such various and frequently conflicting sources of derivation, was in a most confused and unsatisfactory condition. Eminent jurists had long been in favour of attempting to evoke order out of such a confused chaos of authority, and of rendering it possible for a person of ordinary intelligence to acquire some approach to an accurate knowledge of the laws of the land without spending half a lifetime in archæological researches. The abolition of the feudal system by the Seigniorial Tenure Act of 1854 had effected a legal as well as a social revolution, and rendered it imperative, in the public interest, that the arduous task of codification should no longer be delayed. Upon Mr. Cartier, as Attorney-

General East, the responsibility of taking the initiatory steps properly devolved. He acquitted himself of the responsibility by introducing and successfully carrying through a Bill for the desired object. It authorized the Governor to appoint three commissioners, being barristers of Lower Canada, with two secretaries, also barristers, "to reduce into one code, to be called the Civil Code of Lower Canada, those provisions of the laws of Lower Canada which relate to civil matters, and are of a general and permanent character." The measure was opposed, as to some of its details, by Mr. Drummond. Mr. Brown moved for a committee to report as to the practicability of codifying the laws of Upper and Lower Canada, and framing a system adapted to the whole Province; but the motion was negatived, and Mr. Cartier's measure was passed by both Houses. Judges Morin, Day and Caron were in due course appointed Commissioners under the Act. It may here be noted that they began their labours in 1859, and completed them in 1864; and that in 1865 an Act was passed whereby the code was brought into operation.

Another important measure carried through the Assembly under Mr. Cartier's auspices was an Act for the Decentralization of Justice, whereby Lower Canada was divided into nineteen judicial districts, in place of the seven which had previously existed. Its object was to render the attainment of justice easy and cheap, by providing more accessible tribunals and increasing the number of judges. It was a great boon to the people of Lower Canada, and Mr. Cartier won high and deserved prestige among his compatriots for his labours in preparing it and passing it through Parliament. Various important legal reforms relating to Upper Canada were also enacted during the session under the auspices of Attorney-General Macdonald. Mr. Spence is entitled to the credit of an Act to improve the organization and increase the efficiency of the Civil Service. It classified the officers and clerks in the various departments, and established a permanent deputy-minister in each.

The question of Representation by Population had by this time assumed formidable proportions, and kept constantly intruding itself into the debates. The agitation on the subject had been largely fomented by Mr. Brown, who took good care that it should not subside. As was to be expected, the doctrine was almost universally accepted in Upper Canada. During the previous year a great number of petitions had been sent in to Parliament in its favour from various parts of the western section of the Province. Mr. Brown's strenuous advocacy of the doctrine did much to increase and extend his local popularity, and it was also evident that his Parliamentary influence was widening. On the 27th of April he introduced into the Assembly a resolution, "That in the opinion of this House the representation of the people in Parliament should be based on population, without regard to a separating line between Upper and Lower Canada." He was unable to carry it, but the language evoked during the debate proved how strong a hold the doctrine had obtained upon the sympathies of many Upper Canadian members. It was evident that both the contending parties must be prepared to speak with no uncertain sound on the question at the next general elections. As for the Ministry, their position with regard to their Lower Canadian supporters rendered it impossible for them to assent to the demands of Upper Canada, and it is simple justice to say that when the time came for them to take a positive stand they went boldly to the hustings without subterfuge.

The annual discussion respecting the Seat of Government was loud and long during the session of 1857. As previously narrated, the Assembly, during the last session, had decided upon establishing the capital permanently at Quebec, and had voted a sum of money for the erection of public buildings; but the Supply Bill had been rejected by the Upper House in consequence of the item, so that the question was still practically an open one. The Government now decided to ignore the Assembly's vote in 1856, and to avoid further

heartburnings by submitting the selection of a permanent Canadian capital to Her Majesty. This decision evoked a tremendous outcry from the Opposition, who considered that to submit so purely local a question to the Crown was a tampering with Responsible Government. Various amendments were moved, and the succeeding debates were conducted with great vigour and acumen, but the Ministry finally, by a majority of nine,* carried a resolution in favour of an Address to Her Majesty, praying her to select the Seat of Government. The Address was duly transmitted to England. After a short delay, Her Majesty accepted the responsibility, and selected Ottawa as the capital of Canada.

At the end of April, Mr. Cauchon, being unable to induce his colleagues to consent to grant further aid to the North Shore Railway, resigned his portfolio. He possessed great administrative capacity, and had made a very energetic and efficient Commissioner of Crown Lands; but he had been spurred on by his Parliamentary supporters, who were interested in the North Shore line, to make very imperative demands upon his colleagues in the Government, and the latter had not on this occasion thought proper to yield. After Mr. Cauchon's withdrawal, the opposition of his supporters was indirectly mollified by the grant of 1,500,000 acres of land to a company which eventually amalgamated with the North Shore enterprise. As matter of fact, Mr. Cauchon does not seem to have contemplated actual resignation, but certain phrases employed by him in a communication to Colonel Taché were construed by that gentleman as implying a wish to resign, and were accepted as such. Colonel Taché took upon himself the duties of the office which Mr. Cauchon had vacated.

When Parliament was prorogued on the 10th of June, the ministerial organs were able to boast that Government had gone through

* There were 111 members present, and the vote stood 61 to 50. See *Journals*, Tuesday, March 24th, 1857.

an exceptionally busy and productive session without encountering a single defeat. A week later Sir Edmund Head and his family set out from Toronto on a visit to England. During the Governor's absence his viceregal functions were discharged by Lieutenant-General Sir William Eyre, K.C.B., Commander of the Forces in Canada.

The year 1857 was one long to be remembered in this country. It was signalized by the first terrible railway accident that ever occurred in the Province—a calamity which carried desolation to many a Canadian home. On the 12th of March, a Great Western Railway passenger train, proceeding from Toronto to Hamilton, crashed through the bridge spanning the Desjardins Canal, in the immediate neighbourhood of Hamilton, and caused the loss of about seventy lives. On the 26th of the following June a catastrophe attended with still more appalling results occurred in the St. Lawrence river. The *Montreal*, a steamer plying between Quebec and Montreal, having on board several hundred emigrants, principally Scotch and Norwegians, took fire when a short distance above Cape Rouge, and was consumed with such rapidity that about 250 persons lost their lives. As these were the first casualties of their kind in Canada they caused much consternation throughout the Province, and even, it is said, affected the receipts from passenger traffic for an entire season. But there were other reasons for a serious falling off in the traffic. The autumn of the year ushered in the most disastrous commercial crisis through which Canada has ever been compelled to pass. Various causes contributed to bring about such an unpropitious state of affairs. The harvest, generally speaking, was not much more than half a crop, either in Canada or in the chief grain-growing districts of the United States. The crisis began in the New York market early in September, and its echo was soon heard throughout the republic. Erelong the effect made itself felt in Canada. But the chief cause of Provincial disaster was to be

found within our own borders. The country had been passing through an era of extravagance. Costly public works had been set on foot, and railway development had proceeded at a rate altogether incommensurate with our needs. We were called upon to pay the penalty which properly attaches to the acts of those who live beyond their means. Ere the setting-in of winter, trade had become almost stagnant. Some of the leading wholesale houses in the chief commercial centres were unable to meet their engagements, and their failure involved the ruin of numberless retail merchants throughout the Province. Not an insignificant town or village but felt the effect of the terrible ordeal through which the country was passing. There was an almost total collapse of mercantile credit, and every industry was smitten by paralysis. The agricultural community shared in the general gloom. The unexampled prosperity which had attended them during the progress of the Crimean war had induced hundreds of Canadian farmers to launch out into unnecessary expenditure, and to embark in enterprises which they were incapable of conducting to successful issues. Numbers of them were now compelled to mortgage their farms, and to pay exorbitant interest, in order to meet unprofitable engagements which had been entered upon with high hopes. For the time, railway enterprise was over, and the various companies were involved in pecuniary embarrassments. One line was seized for non-payment of interest on the Government bonds. The public revenue of the Province fell off to such an extent that the year's expenditure was $340,000 in excess of the income. It was evident that Canada had entered upon a period of serious mercantile disaster, and that the return of prosperity would not be a matter of weeks or months, but of years.

Such crises are almost always fraught with more or less of peril to a Ministry. The Taché-Macdonald Government formed no exception to the general rule, but though they for a time felt

the strain keenly, they surmounted the first effects with signal success. In November some important ministerial changes occurred. Mr. Terrill, whose private affairs required his personal attention, resigned his portfolio on the 9th of the month, though he nominally retained it until the appointment of his successor on the 25th. Colonel Taché, who had sat in the Cabinet continuously ever since the formation of the second Lafontaine-Baldwin Ministry in March, 1848, and had grown weary of ministerial life, also withdrew from the Government on the 25th. As he was the Premier, his withdrawal implied a dissolution of the Cabinet, but Mr. John A. Macdonald, at the Governor's request, successfully applied himself to the work of reconstruction. The Upper Canadian members agreed to resume their places. Mr. Cartier became the head of the Lower Canada section of the Cabinet, and continued to hold the portfolio of Attorney-General East. Mr. Sicotte resigned the Speakership of the Assembly, and accepted the Commissionership of Crown Lands. Mr. Narcisse Fortunat Belleau, a member of the Upper House,* succeeded Colonel Taché as Speaker of the Legislative Council. The Commissionership of Public Works, which had just been vacated by Mr. Lemieux, was accepted by Mr. Charles Alleyn, a gentleman not hitherto mentioned in these pages. He was a successful lawyer of Irish birth who had long been resident at Quebec, and had sat in the Assembly for that city since the general election of 1854. As a politician he cannot be said to have presented any very salient features, but his abilities were above the average, and he possessed a courtly presence and manner. The Provincial Secretaryship, lately held by Mr. Terrill, was offered to Mr. A. A. Dorion, and declined by him; whereupon it was offered to and accepted by Mr. Thomas Jean Jacques Loranger, member for Laprairie, a gentleman of great talents and considerable oratorical power, who now occupies an honoured position on the judicial bench in his native Province. Mr. Henry

* See *ante*, p. 266.

Smith continued to be Solicitor-General for Upper Canada. The corresponding office for Lower Canada was assumed by Mr. John Rose,* an eminent Montreal lawyer of Scottish birth and parentage. Mr. Rose had not up to this time taken any part in active political life, and had no seat in either House of Parliament, but at the ensuing general election he was returned as one of the members for Montreal.

The Macdonald-Cartier Government assumed the reins of power on the 26th of November, and Mr. Macdonald was thenceforward the head of the Administration in name as well as in fact. Two days afterwards Parliament was dissolved, and the general elections, to which Canadians had for some months been looking forward with anxiety, were fixed for December and January. Both parties plunged into the contest with ardent enthusiasm. The principal issues submitted to the people of Upper Canada were Separate Schools and Representation by Population, on both of which questions party lines were very sharply drawn. The Ministerialists, for reasons already referred to,† advocated Separate Schools, and opposed Representation by Population. Mr. Brown, the most redoubtable opponent of the Government, by his persistent advocacy of the other side of these questions, had made a good many converts. He employed the full weight of his personal and journalistic influence, and his paper and himself were most important factors in the contest. The result, so far as Upper Canada was concerned, was discouraging for the Ministry, three members of which—Messieurs Cayley, Morrison and Spence—failed to secure election in their respective constituencies. Mr. Cayley subsequently found a seat in Renfrew, but Mr. Morrison and Mr. Spence were less fortunate. Mr. Brown enjoyed the triumph of a double return, having been elected both for Toronto and the North Riding of Oxford.

* Now the Hon. Sir John Rose, Bart., K.C.M.G., of the well-known banking firm of Messieurs Morton, Rose & Co., London, England.

† *Ante*, pp. 325, 353.

Many of his warmest adherents were also returned by considerable majorities, and long before the last writ was returnable it was evident that there would be a preponderance of anti-ministerial Upper Canadian votes in the Assembly. In Lower Canada a different order of things prevailed. An overwhelming majority of Ministerialists were elected, and two-thirds of the *Rouge* members who had sat in the last Parliament sustained defeat. Mr. A. A. Dorion, their leader, was among the half dozen or so who were successful in the contest. As to the rest, their alliance with the Upper Canadian Clear Grits was fatal to them. Even Mr. Holton, who personally was both popular and respected, was defeated in Montreal by the new Solicitor-General East. The French Canadian electors could not be brought to vote for candidates who had allied themselves with Mr. Brown and his following—the advocates of unsectarian schools and representation according to population.

With the exception of Messieurs Spence* and Morrison, all the members of the Ministry who were not Legislative Councillors found seats in the Assembly. In addition to the gentlemen already referred to as having been successful in securing their elections, the complete returns contained the names of many old members whose personalities are familiar to the reader, including those of J. S. Macdonald, W. L. Mackenzie, David Christie, George Sherwood, Henry Smith, Malcolm Cameron, W. H. Merritt, M. H. Foley, William Notman and Joseph Hartman from Upper Canada; and Joseph Cauchon, L. T. Drummond, A. T. Galt, J. C. Chapais, C. J. Laberge, F. Lemieux, Dunbar Ross and T. L. Terrill from Lower Canada. Conspicuous among a host of new members were John Rose, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Hector Louis Langevin, Christopher Dunkin, Oliver Mowat, John Sheridan Hogan, William P. Howland and John Carling. Mr. Rose, the new Solicitor-General, has just

* During the following session Mr. Spence withdrew permanently from political life, and accepted the appointment of Collector of Customs at the port of Toronto.

been introduced to the reader. Mr. Dunkin has already been encountered at the bar of the Assembly as the able advocate of the Lower Canadian seigniors, in connection with the subject of the Seigniorial Tenure.* He now took his seat in Parliament for the constituency of Drummond and Arthabaska. Mr. Hogan and his tragical fate were referred to some time back.† He was returned for the county of Grey. Each of the other five gentlemen above named is entitled to a brief introduction.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, one of the most brilliant orators known to our Parliamentary history, had at this time been a resident of Canada only a few months, but his reputation had preceded him hither, and a considerable degree of interest had long attached to his name, for he had "a past behind him," as well as a future before him. He was one of that band of ardent young Irishmen who had been compromised in the Irish troubles of 1848, and had been compelled to seek personal safety beyond the limits of the United Kingdom. He was a native of Carlingford, County Louth, where he was born in 1825. His genius developed itself under somewhat untoward circumstances, for his parents were people in humble circumstances, and unable to afford him many advantages. But the genius was there, and would not be repressed. He was endowed with a glowing, poetic imagination, was full of enthusiasm, and even in his early youth possessed in an eminent degree the national gift of eloquence. These qualifications, however, proved to be unmarketable commodities in his native land, and soon after entering upon his seventeenth year he emigrated to the United States, where he entered upon the career of a journalist, and, notwithstanding his extreme youth, won considerable fame among the Irish Catholic population as a writer and speaker of uncommon power. His repute extended across the Atlantic, insomuch that in 1845 he returned to Ireland to take the editorship of *The Freeman's*

* *Ante*, p. 271. † *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 187, 188, and note on latter page.

Journal, at Dublin. Mr. O'Connell's policy, however, was altogether too moderate for a fiery young Celt of twenty years of age, whose judgment was subordinated by his imagination, and who had lived in the United States long enough to imbibe Irish-American ideas. He soon threw the *Journal* overboard, and joined Charles Gavan Duffy and the band of hot-headed young students who had founded *The Nation.* Thenceforward he glided naturally enough into Smith O'Brien's insurrection. When the collapse came he made his escape in the disguise of a priest, and fled to New York, where he established *The New York Nation*, a weekly newspaper written for the Irish population of America. His want of judgment was signally displayed at the very outset of this enterprise. He editorially assailed the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and attributed the failure of the recent insurrection in Ireland to their conduct in dissuading their parishioners from embarking in the undertaking. This was not to be tolerated. Bishop Hughes, of New York, quietly set his foot upon the *Nation*, and it was no more heard of. Then, untaught by experience, Mr. McGee began a similar enterprise in Boston, under the title of *The American Celt.* By degrees, however, light began to dawn upon him. He began, not only to perceive the folly of kicking against the pricks, but to take broader and more sensible views of life. In a word, he imbibed some of the civilizing influences by which he was surrounded in the intellectual centre of America, and recognized the fact that hatred and revenge are not the noblest sentiments whereby the human mind can be dominated. By slow and imperceptible degrees he was led to perceive that his past life had been a mistake. The tone of his writings and speeches underwent a gradual revolution, and he began to preach a gospel of peace and good-will. He became reconciled to the hierarchy, and thenceforward received their support. In 1852 he removed to Buffalo, where he continued the publication of the *Celt* for about five years, during which time he gained a very high reputation

throughout the republic as a lecturer and writer on Irish affairs. His paper was *par excellence* the exponent of Irish Catholic opinion on this continent, and the fame of its editor extended to Canada, for his eloquence was constantly quoted in the newspapers, and he delivered occasional lectures in Montreal and other Canadian towns. His pecuniary success, however, was not great, as the *Celt* did not champion the cause of any political party, and received no appreciable support except from the Irish population. From time to time some of his well-wishers advised him to remove to Montreal, where the want of a ruling mind was sensibly felt among his fellow-countrymen. In 1857 he acted upon the advice, and removed thither with his family. He founded a newspaper called *The New Era*, wherein he began to advocate an early union of all the British North American colonies. The paper did not live long enough to make any strong impression, for within a short time after its commencement the general elections came on, and its founder was returned to the Assembly as one of the members for Montreal. He then abandoned journalism, and devoted his time to acquiring such a knowledge of Canadian affairs as might fit him for the proper discharge of his duties as a member of Parliament. He was at this time still a young man, being only in his thirty-third year. He joined the ranks of the Opposition, and caused no little annoyance to the Government by his raillery. It must be confessed, however, that at the outset of his career in Parliament he did not justify the sanguine expectations which had been formed of him. He manifested a fondness for saying irritating and ill-natured things, the saying of which could answer no good purpose, and which reflected no credit upon either the intellect or the disposition of the utterer. There was a constant effort to be "smart," with results which were usually by no means commensurate therewith. As the sessions passed by, however, his intellectual range became wider, and the genuine side of his character asserted itself. Long before the occurrence of

the tragedy which deprived the country of his services, Thomas D'Arcy McGee had come to be known as something much more than a clever writer and speaker. He had given the world assurance of a man who recognized the responsibilities of the trying position in which he had been placed. Throughout his life he was an omnivorous reader, and he thus managed to pick up a great deal of miscellaneous knowledge which his brilliant parts enabled him to turn to good account; so that, without being in the strict sense of the word a scholar, he was emphatically a scholarly man, with an inherent reverence for learning. He lived to hold high and honourable office under the Sovereign against whom he had rebelled in the hey-day of youth and inexperience, and had his life been spared there is reason for believing that the land of his adoption would have been better for his having lived in it.

Sir Hector Langevin is too well known to the Canadians of the present day to need any very prolonged introduction. He is a native of the city of Quebec, where he was born in 1826, and where the greater part of his life has been spent. He studied law at Montreal in the office of Mr. A. N. Morin, and was known during his student days as a clever journalist and pamphleteer. In 1850 he was called to the bar, and began practice at Montreal, but during the following year he removed to his native city, which has ever since been his home. In 1855 he gained the first of three extra prizes for an essay on Canada, written for circulation at the Paris exhibition. He was intimately connected with municipal and railway matters in Quebec, and was several times elected mayor of the city. At the general elections of 1857 he was returned to the Assembly for the county of Dorchester, in the Conservative interest. As will presently be seen, he made himself conspicuous before the close of his first Parliamentary session. He has ever since been a prominent figure in political life, and since the death of Sir George Cartier in 1873 he has been recognized as the most distinguished

French Canadian in Parliament. His knightly title had no existence in the remote times of which we are speaking, and was not conferred until 1881.

Oliver Mowat, the present First Minister of Ontario, is a native of Kingston, where his father, a native of the Scottish Highlands, was long engaged in mercantile pursuits, and was identified with the Conservative party, though he had from the first been an advocate of Responsible Government, and an opponent of the exclusive claims of the Church of England to the Clergy Reserves. The son was reared amid Conservative influences, but gave little attention to politics until he had reached an age to form independent opinions. He studied law, and after his call to the bar began practice, first at Kingston and afterwards at Toronto. He devoted himself to the equity branch of his profession, and took the leading position at the Chancery bar. As he approached middle life he formed political ideas widely at variance with those in which he had been reared, and eventually joined the Reform party.* At the general elections of 1857, when he was in his thirty-eighth year, he nailed his colours to the mast by offering himself to the constituency of South Ontario in opposition to the Hon. J. C. Morrison, Receiver-General, whom he defeated by a large majority. The Opposition justly regarded him as an important acquisition to their ranks, wherein he took a place second only to that occupied by Mr. Brown himself.

Mr.—now the Hon. Sir William Pearce—Howland was then, as now, one of the commercial magnates of Toronto. He is a native of the State of New York, but has resided in Canada since his

* "Some Conservatives regarded and spoke of his alliance with the Reform Party as a defection from their ranks. A defection, however, it certainly was not, as he had never been allied with the Tory party, as had his father. He had never recorded a Tory vote, or in fact taken any part in political life. His growing leanings in the direction of Liberalism were the outgrowth of the times, and of his own study and reflection."—*Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. II., p. 88.

youth, and has long been recognized as more Canadian in his sympathies than many persons to the manner born. He was returned in the Reform interest for the West Riding of York, a constituency in which many years of his life had been passed, and where he had laid the foundation of his fortunes. He was known as a man of great shrewdness, and of much business enterprise and judgment.

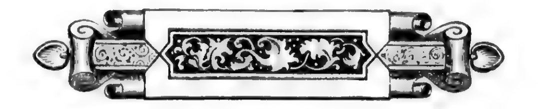
John Carling is of English descent, and was born in the township of London, Upper Canada, in 1828. He has all his life been connected with the brewing interest, with which the name of his family is inseparably associated in this Province. In politics he is, and has ever been, a Conservative of moderate views. He first entered public life at the period under consideration as member for the city of London, which he has ever since represented in Parliament. Without possessing any special gifts as a politician, he is known as an excellent man of business, of much enterprise and public spirit, and enjoying much personal popularity.

Isaac Buchanan, though not strictly a new member, had been so long out of public life that he might almost be so regarded. We have already made his acquaintance as a member for the city of Toronto in the First Parliament under the Union.* He had resigned his seat on the 2nd of January, 1843, and during the intervening fifteen years had not offered himself as a candidate for any constituency. He was now returned for the city of Hamilton—in which he resided—as a supporter of the Government. He still called himself a Conservative Reformer, and continued to take a keen interest in all questions relating to finance and trade.

Malcolm Cameron, after an absence of more than three years from public life, now took his seat once more in the Assembly as member for Lambton. Though he had been one of the founders of the Clear Grit party, he for some time henceforth gave a general support to the Macdonald-Cartier Government.

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* *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 104, 105.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SHORT ADMINISTRATION.

"A Ministry of two days: a thing which was, and which is not, before either friend or foe can realize its existence."—*The Cosmopolitan*, Toronto; August 11th, 1858.

AT the beginning of February, 1858, Messieurs Spence and Morrison, having failed in their respective elections, demitted their seats in the Cabinet. The Postmaster-General's portfolio was accepted by Mr. Sidney Smith, who had sat during the last Parliament for the West Riding of Northumberland, and who had now been reëlected for that constituency. He was a successful lawyer, resident at Cobourg, and had up to this time been in the ranks of the Upper Canadian Opposition. The Receiver-Generalship was assumed by the Hon. John Ross, who had resigned the Attorney-General's portfolio during the session of 1856.* Mr. Cayley's candidature in Renfrew being considered safe (as it ultimately proved to be), the Inspector-Generalship was permitted to remain in his hands, and the Cabinet was thus complete.

The intelligence that Ottawa had been fixed upon by Imperial mandate as the Provincial capital became known in Canada early in the year, but too late to exercise any influence upon the elections, which were just over. Her Majesty's choice was most unpopular with the Opposition, and their organs inveighed loudly on the subject until the meeting of Parliament. In Montreal and Quebec there was naturally much dissatisfaction, independently of party

* *Ante*, p. 336.

considerations. All the circumstances being taken into account, however, it would seem that the royal selection was wisely made. Standing on the boundary-line between the two Provinces, Ottawa's position, more especially as compared with that of Quebec or Toronto, was central. Being remote from the frontier, it might be regarded as comparatively safe in the event of aggression from across the lines. But its highest recommendation was unquestionably to be found in the fact that its geographical position afforded a sort of compromise between the rival claims of Upper and Lower Canada, which claims had presented the most serious obstacle to the settlement of the Seat of Government question for years past.

The new Parliament assembled at Toronto on the 25th of February. Mr. Henry Smith was elected Speaker of the Assembly without opposition. The Speech from the Throne, which was delivered by the Governor on the 26th, outlined a few practical measures of reform, but was otherwise unimportant. It referred to the settlement of the Seat of Government question, but the reference was of the most cursory nature, and was inserted in the middle of a short paragraph referring to the Hudson's Bay Company's territory. The Address in Reply gave rise to an exceptional number of amendments, which were so worded as to force the Government to declare their policy on all the great questions of the time. Long before the debates came to a close it had become evident that there would be a considerable preponderance of Upper Canadian votes against the Ministry, who must either resign office or consent to abandon the double-majority principle, and carry on the affairs of the country by means of a majority obtained from Lower Canada. In adopting the latter alternative they would violate no principle. They would merely say, in effect: "We have changed our opinions on this subject." The amendments were voted down, one after another. It was clear that the Government could command a majority of from twenty to thirty of the whole

House, though it was equally clear that they were in a minority as regarded Upper Canada. Under these circumstances they resolved, as the less of two evils, to incur the charge of inconsistency, rather than hand over the reins of power to their opponents. The double-majority doctrine was cast overboard, and the ministerial ship, lightened of so unmanageable a burthen, pursued its way with a favouring wind. Thenceforward until towards the end of July the sessional business was carried on with energy, and with tolerably productive results. During the interval the double-majority question received a formal Parliamentary quietus. A motion by Mr. Joseph E. Thibaudeau, member for Portneuf, that "any attempt at legislation which would affect one section of the Province, in opposition to the votes of a majority of the representatives of that section, would produce consequences detrimental to the welfare of the Province," gave rise to a full discussion of the entire question involved. This motion, as well as a number of amendments affirming the double-majority principle, was opposed by the whole power of the Administration, the very life of which was menaced thereby. The Opposition also put forward their utmost strength. The latter were strong in oratorical ability, and now included in their ranks the three ex-Ministers, Messieurs Cauchon, Drummond and Lemieux, as well as the three new members, Messieurs McGee, Mowat and Hogan. But the incidents of former sessions were repeated. The Opposition were divided by sectional and personal jealousies, as well as by differences of opinion on public questions; * whereas the Ministerialists stood loyally by each other, and presented an almost unbroken front.† Mr. Thibaudeau's motion and the various amendments were defeated by majorities which plainly proved that on

* Messieurs George Brown, David Christie, J. S. Hogan, Oliver Mowat, and many other members of the Upper Canadian Opposition voted on the same side as the Ministerialists on this question, and others shirked the vote by purposely absenting themselves.

† Several of their supporters, however, including Mr. Langevin, the new member for Dorchester, voted in favour of the double-majority doctrine.

any vital question the Administration had nothing to fear. From that time forward, the question of a double or sectional majority cannot be said to have ever presented itself before the Canadian Parliament as a matter for practical consideration.

The Opposition, though beaten, were not discouraged, and addressed themselves to the task of discomfiting the Ministry on another important question. The selection of Ottawa as the Provincial capital had occasioned a good deal of surprise throughout the country, and, as previously mentioned, had been eagerly seized hold of by the Opposition as a weapon to be used against the Administration. Her Majesty's choice had been ratified by Parliament, and a sum had been appropriated for the erection of public buildings, but these circumstances did not deter the opponents of the Government from attempting to reverse the decision. A series of motions expressive of dissatisfaction at the Imperial selection was now set on foot. After the first of the series, which was moved by Mr. A. A. Dorion in connection with a question of supply, had been voted down, the matter was allowed to rest until the 28th of July, when the subject was revived by Mr. Thibaudeau. His motion, which was to the same purport as Mr. Dorion's, was for that reason ruled to be out of order; whereupon Mr. Dunkin moved an address to the Queen, praying Her Majesty to reconsider her decision, and to name Montreal instead of Ottawa. Such a motion could not be expected to command a very wide support, and Mr. Brown moved in amendment, "That an humble address be presented to his Excellency, praying that no action be taken towards the erection of public buildings at Ottawa for the permanent accommodation of the Executive Government and Legislature, or for the removal of the public departments to that city." A further amendment by Mr. Piché, member for Berthier, "That it is the opinion of this House that the city of Ottawa ought not to be the permanent Seat of Government for the Province," came next in order, and upon it,

after a long debate, the sense of the House was taken. The vote stood 64 to 50 in favour of the amendment, and Mr. Brown rose in his place, to the accompaniment of a perfect whirlwind of Opposition cheers. The House, he said, could have no doubt that the motion which had just been carried was an express disapproval of the Government policy; and in order to test the matter he would move an adjournment. Attorney-General Macdonald, on the part of himself and his colleagues, at once signified his acceptance of the challenge, and declared his willingness to make his retention of office dependent on the vote about to be given. Attorney-General Cartier expressed similar sentiments; and the House was made to thoroughly understand that the fate of the Ministry depended upon the impending vote. Now, there were a good many members who disapproved of Ottawa as the Seat of Government, and who yet were by no means prepared to vote for a transfer of power from Mr. Macdonald to Mr. Brown. Upon the question being submitted, the motion for adjournment was defeated by a majority of 11, the vote standing 61 to 50. The evidence thus afforded was conclusive. The Administration possessed the confidence of a majority of the people's representatives. But the majority was derived from Lower Canada, and the Upper Canadian vote was decidedly adverse. The source of the majority was of less consequence since the repudiation of the double-majority doctrine; but the circumstances were peculiar, and after careful deliberation the Ministry concluded that they would best serve their own interests by resigning. They knew that they could command a majority in the Assembly, and that no Government formed by their opponents could be permanent. The Opposition, by approving and carrying Mr. Piché's amendment, had taken a stand which might easily be made to tell against them in the popular mind. They had laid themselves open to the charge of having practically passed a vote of censure upon Her Majesty. The Ministry, by promptly

resigning office, would identify themselves with the cause of their Sovereign. They would be certain to win public sympathy, and thus gain by their opponents' loss. The Opposition would be called on to form a Cabinet, and would doubtless make the attempt, but, owing to the want of coherence in their ranks, it was certain that they could not get together any body of men that could command the support of a majority of the Assembly, as then constituted, for any considerable length of time. Acting upon these well-grounded assumptions, the Government, though they were under no constitutional necessity for so doing, tendered their resignations on Thursday, the 29th—the day succeeding the hostile vote on the Seat of Government.

Mr. Brown, as the most conspicuous member of the Opposition, was forthwith charged by his Excellency with the task of forming a new Administration. On the afternoon of Friday, the 30th, Mr. J. S. Macdonald announced to the Assembly that Mr. Brown, in conjunction with Mr. Dorion, had entered upon negotiations which, it was hoped, would soon be successfully completed. A delay of three days was asked for, and readily granted. On the morning of Saturday, the 31st, in the course of an interview between the Governor-General and Mr. Brown, the question of an immediate dissolution of Parliament was discussed. It would seem that, contrary to what has often been asserted, the discussion did not assume the shape of an endeavour on Mr. Brown's part to obtain his Excellency's consent to a dissolution. The subject appears to have been merely talked over, in connection with various other possibilities of the near future. It is at all events certain that Mr. Brown left Government House without having obtained from his Excellency any definite expression of opinion on the subject of a dissolution, and that, in the absence of any such expression of opinion, he addressed himself to the task of completing his negotiations for the formation of a Ministry. The full significance of these facts will presently be understood.

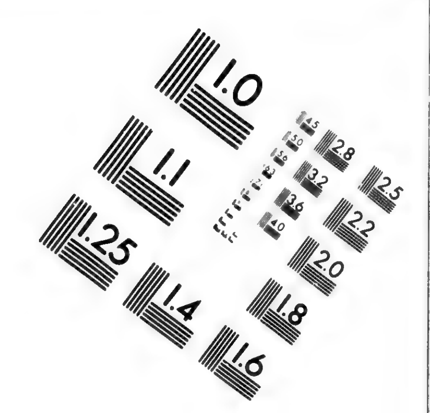
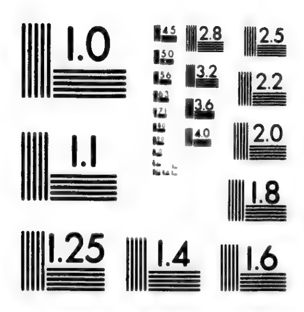
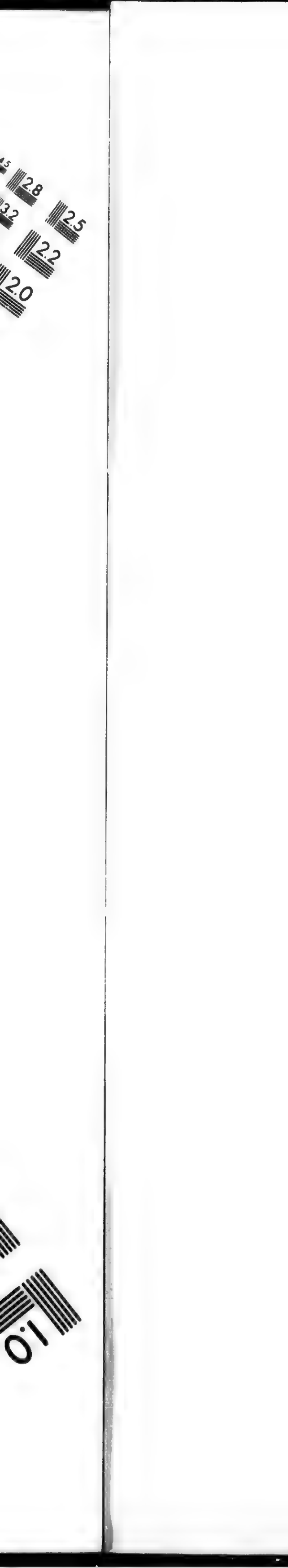


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Mr. Brown's greatest difficulty, as might have been anticipated, was to obtain any foothold in Lower Canada. Through his alliance with Mr. Dorion he could count upon the *Rouge* influence, but that was now inconsiderable. Mr. Sicotte, ex-Commissioner of Crown Lands, was approached with proposals which would have left him free to adopt great latitude of action; but that gentleman was not disposed to enter into any alliance with Mr. Brown, and rejected all overtures to that end. With Messieurs Lemieux, Laberge and Thibaudeau the approaches were more successful, and to these were added Mr. Drummond, as the representative of the Irish Roman Catholic population, and Mr. Holton, who had no seat in Parliament, having, as already mentioned, been defeated in Montreal at the last election by Solicitor-General Rose. In Upper Canada there were no serious difficulties in the way, and the offices were soon apportioned. The negotiations were practically completed on Saturday, but were not formally ratified until Sunday, the 1st of August. About ten o'clock on Sunday evening a circumstance occurred to which, in the subsequent course of events, much significance was attached. One of the Governor's aides-de-camp waited upon Mr. Brown and handed him a memorandum from his Excellency embodying several important notifications. "The Governor-General"—so ran the memorandum—"gives no pledge or promise, express or implied, with reference to dissolving Parliament. When advice is tendered to his Excellency on this subject he will make up his mind according to the circumstances then existing, and the reasons then laid before him." The memorandum then set forth that the Governor was willing to consent to a prorogation, upon the understanding that Parliament should meet again as soon as possible—"say in November or December;" but the opinion was expressed that the business transacted in the interval should be confined to matters necessary for the ordinary administration of Government; and it was suggested that a measure for the registration of voters and another for the prohibition of fraudulent assign-

ments* should be proceeded with and passed. "Besides this," continued the Governor, "any item of supply absolutely necessary should be provided for by a vote of credit, and the money for repairs of the canals, which cannot be postponed, should be voted." An intimation was added that his Excellency could not consent to a prorogation until these necessary steps should have been taken.

Early on the following (Monday) morning Mr. Brown, without consulting his colleagues, replied on his own sole responsibility to this missive. He intimated that he had successfully fulfilled the duty entrusted to him, and that he and his proposed colleagues would not be in a position to discuss "the important measures and questions of public policy referred to in his Excellency's memorandum" until they had "assumed the functions of constitutional advisers of the Crown." A few minutes after despatching his reply Mr. Brown waited upon the Governor, and submitted for his approval the names of the proposed Ministers. At noon on the same day the latter were sworn into office. In the Assembly, after the transaction of the usual routine business, Mr. William Patrick, member for South Grenville, announced the names of the new Ministry. They were as follow:

UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. George Brown, Premier and Inspector-General.
" " J. S. Macdonald, Attorney-General West.
" " James Morris, Speaker of the Legislative Council.
" " M. H. Foley, Postmaster-General.
" " Oliver Mowat, Provincial Secretary.

LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. A. A. Dorion, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

* Bills to effect these objects had already made some progress during the session, and were passed before its close.

The Hon. L. T. Drummond, Attorney-General East.
" " L. H. Holton, Commissioner of Public Works.
" " F. Lemieux, Receiver-General.
" " J. E. Thibaudeau, President of the Council.

The Solicitors-General West and East respectively were Skeffington Connor, member for South Oxford, and Charles Joseph Laberge, member for Iberville.

But Mr. Brown's difficulties, so far from being ended with the formation of his Ministry, were only just beginning. After announcing the names of the new Ministers, Mr. Patrick intimated that they would fully explain their views when they were in their seats; and that meanwhile he had been instructed by them to declare their wish that the necessary business of the country should be closed, and that Parliament should be prorogued at the earliest possible day. He added that the Government had not had time to consider the public measures before the House, but would lose no time in doing so, and that he hoped to be able to be more explicit on the morrow. A similar explanation was then made in French by Mr. Piché; and after the Speaker had instructed the Clerk to call the order of the day, Mr. Bureau, member for Napierville, seconded by Mr. Piché, moved the issue of a writ for the election of a member for Montreal, in the room of Mr. Dorion. To this motion Mr. Langevin moved an amendment: "That this House, while ordering the said writ, must at the same time state that the Administration, the formation of which has created this vacancy, does not possess the confidence of this House and of the country." By moving this amendment the member for Dorchester gained some notoriety at the time, and that not altogether of an enviable kind, for there was a very general feeling that his motion was a violation of Parliamentary courtesy.* The Ministers involved in it had, by accepting

* "There can be no doubt," says Mr. Fennings Taylor, "that the resolution exactly expressed the sentiment of Parliament, but it is by no means as clear that the time of

office, vacated their seats, and were thus unable to defend themselves in Parliament. Undoubtedly, however, there was another side to the question. The declaration made by Mr. Patrick on behalf of the Administration had been exceedingly meagre and unsubstantial, and left them free to adopt almost any line of action whatever. It was notorious that the gentlemen whose names had been announced as composing the new Ministry entertained widely divergent views on many of the most important questions of the day. Had they authorized their spokesman to announce a policy, even of the most elastic character, they would have been entitled to ask for a fair trial; but they had no right to ask Parliament either to take their policy for granted or to trust them blindfold. As simple matter of fact, the Brown-Dorion Administration had not matured a policy, and the heterogeneous elements of which they were composed rendered much deliberation necessary. If Mr. Langevin's amendment was unusual, so likewise were the circumstances, and the spirit of keen political antagonism prevented many persons from acting, or even thinking, with judicial impartiality.

The amendment was seconded by Mr. John Beverley Robinson, junior member for Toronto, a son of the distinguished Chief Justice of Upper Canada. The debate upon it lasted from the middle of the afternoon until past midnight. A vote was then taken, and it was found that the Ministry were in a minority of forty; and this on an amendment which was a direct motion of want of confidence. They were indeed doubly in a minority, for even in Upper Canada, where their main—almost their only—strength lay, there was a majority of two votes against them. Only four Lower Canadian votes were recorded in their favour.

submitting it was well chosen. Less haste would not, in all probability, have altered the vote; perhaps it might have increased the majority by which it was affirmed. In any case it would have placed the proceeding beyond the reproach of unfairness, and have effectually removed it from the grave imputation, which has been affixed to it by many, of being wanting in Parliamentary courtesy. . . The proceeding appeared to lack generosity, and though it offended no rule, it was not, so far as we are aware, supported by any example of Parliament."—*Portraits of British Americans*, Vol. II., p. 239.

In the Upper House, on the same evening, opinion was also strongly expressed against the Government. Mr. Morris having made similar announcements to those made in the Assembly by Mr. Patrick, a long debate followed, which was participated in by twenty-five out of the twenty-eight members present. Speeches specially condemnatory of the Administration were made by Mr. Vankoughnet and Colonel Prince. A motion of want of confidence, moved by Mr. Patton,* was carried by a vote of 16 to 8, and an address to the Governor, founded upon it, passed on a similar division. The address was duly engrossed and presented to his Excellency. This passing of a vote of want of confidence in Ministers who had not had time to seek reëlection, and who had not declared their policy, was certainly a harsh proceeding, and had no exemplar in our history. Mr. Cauchon was so sensible of the harshness that he declined to record his vote on either side. The proceeding, however, can hardly be said to have been wholly without excuse, for the Ministry had committed a grave error in making no attempt to disclose anything in the shape of a policy, and they had no right to expect forbearance from those whom they had so unsparingly opposed all through the session.

In such a contingency there was a very plain alternative before the Government. They must either obtain an immediate dissolution of Parliament, or resign. They recognized the necessities of their position, and on the morning of Tuesday, the 3rd, Mr. Brown waited upon his Excellency. The discussion of four days before was resumed, and Mr. Brown, on behalf of himself and his colleagues, advised an immediate prorogation, to be followed by dissolution. The Governor perceived the necessity of acting with circumspection, and requested that the grounds upon which the advice was preferred should be put in writing. The request was complied with, and a memorandum was prepared for his Excel-

* Mr. Patton sat in the Upper House for the Saugeen Division, having been elected in 1856.

lency's consideration. It set forth, among other grounds, that the Assembly, as then constituted, did not, in the opinion of the existing Cabinet, possess the confidence of the country; that many seats had been obtained by corruption and fraud at the last election;* that strong sectional feelings had arisen in the country, and had seriously impeded the carrying on of the Government; and that the present Government had taken office with the fixed determination to propose constitutional measures for the establishment of harmony between Upper and Lower Canada. The memorandum having been delivered at Government House, nothing further could be done until his Excellency's reply should be received. In the course of the afternoon, after the transaction of some formal and unimportant business in the Assembly, Mr. Patrick, on behalf of the Government, asked for and obtained an adjournment until the following day.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 4th, the Governor's reply was received by Mr. Brown. It was an elaborate document, and much skill had evidently been employed in its preparation. It traversed, step by step, the ground covered by Mr. Brown's memorandum. It drew attention to the fact that if, as alleged, the existing House of Assembly did not truly represent the Canadian people, there had been no sufficient reason for the resignation of the late Government. In view of the fact that a general election had taken place a few months before, his Excellency did not think proper to put the country to the expense and inconvenience of another, unless very strong grounds could be shown for such a proceeding. With respect to the corruption and bribery alleged to have been practised, it was asked: "What assurance can his Excellency have that a new election, under precisely the same laws, held within six or eight months of the last, will differ in its

* This was undeniable, and a considerable part of the session had been consumed in discussions arising out of contested election cases.

character from that which then took place?" "If the facts are as they are stated to be," pursued his Excellency, with scarcely repressed sarcasm, "they might be urged as a reason why a general election should be avoided as long as possible: at any rate until the laws are made more stringent, and the precautions against such evils shall have been increased by the wisdom of Parliament." The sectional feeling between Upper and Lower Canada was admitted to be a grave question, but before granting a dissolution on that ground, his Excellency desired to have some evidence that the measures adopted by Mr. Brown and his colleagues would be "a specific, and the only specific" for the evil; and that the members of the existing Government would be the only men in the country likely to calm the passions and allay the jealousies so unhappily existing. "It may be," continued the Governor, "that both propositions are true, but unless they are established to his Excellency's complete satisfaction, the mere existence of the mischief is not in itself decisive as to the propriety of resorting to a general election at the present moment. The certainty, or at any rate the great probability, of the cure by the course proposed, and by that alone, would require to be also proved. Without this, a great present evil would be voluntarily incurred for the chance of a remote good. It would seem to be the duty of his Excellency to exhaust every possible alternative before subjecting the Province for the second time in the same year to the cost, the inconvenience, and the demoralization of such a proceeding. The Governor-General is by no means satisfied that every alternative has been thus exhausted, or that it would be impossible for him to secure a Ministry who would close the business of this session and carry on the administration of the Government during the recess with the confidence of a majority of the Legislative Assembly." His Excellency concluded his memorandum by declining, "after full and mature deliberation," to accede to the request for a dissolution of Parliament.

The Governor-General's conduct at this crisis aroused the hot

anger of Mr. Brown and his followers, and the feeling was destined to survive until long after Sir Edmund had ceased to exert any influence over Canadian affairs. The Reform press, with *The Globe* at its head, poured out the vials of its wrath in no stinted tide. Many English journals joined in the wholesale denunciation of the Governor, and drew uncomplimentary parallels between him and Sir Charles Metcalfe. In some parts of Upper Canada the tone of the public mind was for some days almost revolutionary. It was broadly hinted that Chief Justice Draper, who had long since returned from his English mission, and who was a frequent guest at Government House, was the real author of the Governor's cunningly-worded memorandum. It was even said, and doubtless believed, that all through the transactions above described there had been a secret understanding, express or implied, between the Governor-General and the leader of the Macdonald-Cartier Government, and that the Queen's representative had actually lent himself to the underhand designs of an unscrupulous party-politician, who wished to get rid of the Opposition leaders for the time.* Such a charge, it would seem, ought to carry its refutation upon its face, but even at the present day there are intelligent persons in Canada so blinded by prejudice as to seriously profess belief in it. In the opinion of the present writer such a belief has not a tittle of evidence to support it, and is simply preposterous. It has ever been the fashion of disappointed political aspirants to be suspicious of those in authority; but the suspicion, in the case under review, would seem to have passed all legitimate bounds. It may be conceded that Sir Edmund had no partiality for Mr. Brown, and that he was mentally unjust in estimating that

* The Opposition leaders, by accepting office, of course vacated their seats, and were thus debarred from taking their seats in Parliament until after their reëlection. A few weeks, however, would suffice for their reëlection, and why Mr. Macdonald should have been specially anxious to "get rid" of them at that particular time, especially when there was a decided probability of their soon being restored to their seats, is a matter not easy to explain. Certainly no explanation that has ever been given is sufficient to justify the aspersions cast upon Sir Edmund Head.

gentleman's character. He—at any rate in 1858—regarded him as a mere obstructionist, who was inordinately ambitious of power, and ever on the alert to embarrass the Government for his own ends. That such an estimate was far from accurate will now be disputed by few, but Mr. Brown's contemporaries a quarter of a century ago were by no means so capable of doing justice to his aims as we are at the present day. Doubtless Sir Edmund was prejudiced against most of the Reform leaders, and there was a misty vein of narrowness in his intellectual vision, which did not always permit him to see through clear glasses. His treatment of Mr. Brown was unnecessarily arbitrary. It was deficient in frankness, and devoid of large-mindedness. It is even probable enough that the events of the first week in August may have been partly foreseen by the Governor and by Chief Justice Draper, as well as by Mr. Macdonald and his colleagues. But, so much being conceded, there is no discoverable ground for aspersing his Excellency's memory by charges which there has never been any serious attempt to substantiate by evidence. A careful study of all the circumstances must convince a dispassionate enquirer that Sir Edmund, though imbued with a decided leaning in favour of the men he had found in power upon his assumption of the Government—and who had been in power ever since—was nevertheless sincerely desirous of acting up to the spirit and letter of the constitution, and of holding the balance fairly between the rival parties. And it further appears that he carried out his desire, and was substantially just, though he allowed his preferences to become somewhat too apparent, and though his conduct was neither amiable nor diplomatic.

So far as to his Excellency's motives. The constitutionality of his conduct affords more room for argument; though even there his diplomacy seems to have been more at fault than his law. At a first glance it certainly appears inconsistent that he should entrust the formation of a Government to a gentleman whose supporters were notoriously in a minority in the Assembly; and that he

should then, after his behests had been obeyed, refuse to afford that gentleman an opportunity of strengthening his position. As the Assembly was then constituted, it was utterly out of the question that any Government formed by Mr. Brown should command a majority of votes. Why, then, it may be asked, did the Governor go through the farce of allowing Mr. Brown to form a Government which must inevitably be defeated? The answer to this query is two-fold. In the first place, it was not generally believed that Mr. Brown would be able to obtain any such support in Lower Canada as would enable him to form a Ministry at all. In the second place, supposing him to have been successful in forming a Ministry, various contingencies might happen from day to day to alter the tone of feeling in the Assembly. But in any case, as the Government had resigned, it was his Excellency's duty to afford the Opposition the means of testing their strength under ministerial prestige, and if he had failed to do so he would have brought down upon his head the merited thunders of the Reform press. Mr. Brown's own newspaper declared again and again that that gentleman would have no difficulty in forming a Government which would command a majority in the Assembly. The opportunity was afforded, and Mr. Brown doubtless made the most of it, but the most proved to be insufficient, and no special circumstances occurred to turn the tide in his favour. The Governor's reply to the demand made upon him for a dissolution was fully borne out by the facts of the case. The Macdonald-Cartier Government had resigned voluntarily, and in the face of a vote which showed that they possessed the confidence of a majority of the Assembly. Their successors, on the other hand, had been met by a direct vote of want of confidence in both Houses. In the Assembly they had been defeated by a majority of 40 in a House of 102. The full membership was only 130, so that even if all the other 28 members had been present, and if every one of them had voted to sustain the Brown-Dorion Government, the latter would still have been in a minority.

In the Upper House the vote against them was two to one. The Governor was not bound to grant a dissolution upon the advice of a Ministry which did not possess the confidence of either branch of the Legislature, more especially when no imperative grounds for such a step were established. There was no new question upon which to found a fresh appeal to the country. There was no disruption of party ties; no such change in the position of affairs as to leave room for doubt that the Macdonald-Cartier Government could still command a working majority in the Assembly. It was clearly the Governor's duty, as he alleged, to exhaust every possible alternative before dissolving a Parliament that had been elected only seven months before.

The determination arrived at by the Governor rendered it incumbent upon Mr. Brown and his colleagues to tender their resignations, which they lost no time in doing. This was on Wednesday, the 4th.* The same afternoon Mr. Lewis Wallbridge, member for South Hastings, announced the resignation to the Assembly, and, having received authority to that effect, he also communicated to the House the correspondence between the head of the Government and Mr. Brown. A long and acrid debate followed, in the course of which Mr. McGee spoke with much earnestness against the course pursued by the Governor; and Mr. John A. Macdonald indignantly repudiated the insinuations which had been made as to collusion between the Governor and himself.

Upon the resignation of the Brown-Dorion Ministry, his Excellency applied to Mr. Galt, member for Sherbrooke. That gentleman had developed high Parliamentary qualifications during the last two or three sessions, and had come to be regarded with much respect in the Assembly, where he took a specially conspicuous part

* It will be seen from the text that Mr. Brown and his colleagues were sworn in shortly after noon on Monday, the 2nd, so that they were only actually in office about forty-eight hours. They nominally held their portfolios until the appointment of their successors on the 6th, but their tenure of office was not signalized by a single act, Parliamentary or Administrative.

in the discussion of questions relating to trade and finance. He had also become an advocate of a federal union of the British North American Provinces, and during the current session had introduced that subject to the Assembly in a telling speech. He possessed a judicial mind, which impelled him to look at every side of a question before pronouncing a decision upon it. Being independent and moderate in his opinions, he persistently refused to connect himself with the violent partisanship of either side. He had given a general support to the Macdonald-Cartier Government, but had not hesitated to vote against them on several occasions. As a necessary consequence of his independence, however, he occupied an almost isolated position in the Assembly, and had no appreciable following. He was, moreover, a staunch supporter of Protestantism, and was in consequence not regarded with special favour by the Roman Catholic representatives of Lower Canada, whose hearty coöperation was absolutely essential to any man seeking to form a stable Ministry. Feeling that he could not hope to be successful in any attempt in that direction, he wisely declined the task which the Governor sought to impose upon him. His Excellency then, at Mr. Galt's suggestion, had recourse to Mr. Macdonald's late colleague, Mr. Cartier, who had at that time the largest Parliamentary following in the Assembly. Mr. Cartier readily undertook and fulfilled the task of forming an Administration, choosing his materials almost entirely from the Macdonald-Cartier Government which had resigned a week before. Mr. Cayley and Mr. Loranger were left out, and Mr. Galt and Mr. George Sherwood took their places. Mr. Galt's financial ability rendered him specially acceptable to a Government which had to face a serious deficit in the exchequer. Mr. Sherwood had served his party long and faithfully, and it was considered that his services were well worthy of such recognition as they now received.

The Cartier-Macdonald Administration was formed on the 6th of August. Its accession to power was substantially a resumption of office by the Macdonald-Cartier Government. Its composition, with

the two exceptions above mentioned, was the same. It was guided by the same minds, and its policy remained practically unaltered. The leaders in the two sections of the latter were the same as in those of the former. So far, well. But, in direct violation of the spirit of the law, the members of the old Government who now resumed office did not return to their constituents for reëlection. By the seventh section of a statute passed during the session of 1857, intituled "An Act further to secure the Independence of Parliament," it was enacted that "Whenever any person holding the office of Receiver-General, Inspector-General, Secretary of the Province, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Attorney-General, Solicitor-General, Commissioner of Public Works, Speaker of the Legislative Council, President of Committees of the Executive Council, Minister of Agriculture or Postmaster-General, and being at the same time a member of the Legislative Assembly or an elected member of the Legislative Council, shall resign his office, and within one month after his resignation accept any other of the said offices, he shall not thereby vacate his seat in the said Assembly or Council." The object of this enactment was merely to enable casual interchanges or transfers of portfolios whenever required by the exigencies of the public service. But there was nothing in the Act to so restrict its application; nothing to prevent such a proceeding as now took place. The letter of the statute was not transgressed, for only eight days elapsed between the demission of the 29th of July and the resumption on the 6th of August. The portfolios accepted on the 6th—by such Ministers, at least, as were members of the Assembly—were different from those which had been held by the same persons in the former Administration; so that the technical requirements of the Act were complied with. Mr. Cartier became Inspector-General, Mr. Macdonald Postmaster-General, Mr. Sicotte Commissioner of Public Works, Mr. Alleyn Provincial Secretary, Mr. Rose Receiver-General, and Mr. Sidney Smith President of the Council and Minister of Agriculture. Messieurs Vankoughnet and Belleau

being members of the Upper House, and under no necessity to appeal to popular suffrage, were reinstated in the offices they had previously held. But there was no intention of permitting the arrangements of the 6th of August to remain undisturbed. The law having been complied with, there was no strict legal objection to further readjustments, and on the 7th Mr. Cartier and Mr. Macdonald resumed their former portfolios of Attorneys-General East and West respectively. Mr. Smith was at the same time restored to the Postmaster-Generalship. When all arrangements had been completed, the adjustment of the portfolios was as follows:

LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. G. E. Cartier, Premier, and Attorney-General East.
" " A. T. Galt, Inspector-General.
" " N. F. Belleau, Speaker of the Legislative Council.
" " L. V. Sicotte, Minister of Public Works.
" " Charles Alleyn, Provincial Secretary.

UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. J. A. Macdonald, Attorney-General West.
" " P. M. Vankoughnet, Commissioner of Crown Lands.
" " Sidney Smith, Postmaster-General.
" " John Ross, President of the Council.
" " George Sherwood, Receiver-General.

On the same day Mr. Rose resumed the Solicitor-Generalship for Lower Canada which he had vacated on the 29th ultimo. The corresponding office for Upper Canada remained vacant for a year and a half thereafter.*

But, though there was no breach of the letter of the law, there was such a manifest evasion of its spirit that the moral sense of the

* It had also remained vacant from the time of Mr. Henry Smith's resignation, at the opening of the session of 1858, until the acceptance of the office by Dr. Connor on the 2nd of August; so that about two years elapsed during which there was really no Solicitor-General for Upper Canada.

community was shocked. There was a general feeling that the Independence of Parliament Act had been wrested from its true purpose, and that the constitution had been trifled with. It was evident that the shuffling of portfolios had been resorted to merely for the purpose of relieving Ministers from the necessity of appealing to their constituents. Indeed, Mr. Cartier's frank explanations to the Assembly on the 7th of August left no room for doubt on that head. He expressly stated that "the course followed in the appointments" had been adopted "to meet the requirements of the law, and at the same time to prevent any unnecessary elections." The Assembly condoned the proceeding,* but the condonation found only a feeble echo beyond the walls of Parliament, and many influential voices were raised in condemnation of this "Double Shuffle," as it was called. Expressions of hostile opinion were not confined to that section of the press that usually followed the lead of *The Globe*. It was regarded as no light thing that Ministers should have taken a solemn oath to discharge the duties pertaining to certain offices, when they had no intention of holding those offices long enough to admit of their performing any official act whatever. Proceedings were instituted in the courts of law to test the legality of the conduct of some of the offending Ministers. By the Act of 1857, already referred to, persons sitting and voting in the Assembly while legally disqualified, were declared liable to pecuniary penalties. Actions were accordingly brought by a private individual against three of the Ministers to recover these penalties. The arguments were heard by way of demurrer at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, in the following November. The judgments, which were rendered in December, uniformly exonerated the defendants from liability in respect of the statutory penalties, and declared that the letter of the law had not been violated.† But there has never been any

* See Journals Leg. Ass., 1858, pp. 973-976, 1001.

† See 17 U.C.Q.B. Reports, 310; 8 U.C.C.P. 479.

difference of opinion as to the moral turpitude of the Double Shuffle, and the law has since been so modified as to prevent any repetition of the proceeding.*

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that during the whole of the transactions described in the last few pages, the leading spirits of both the rival political parties were more solicitous for power than for their country's welfare. In the absence of an express pledge from the Governor on the subject of a dissolution, Mr. Brown was unwise to undertake the formation of a Government which could only hope to live in the event of something unusual and unforeseen taking place. His failure was injurious to his own reputation for sagacity, and certainly did not conduce to the interests of his party. The Double Shuffle was a much more culpable affair, and can be defended—if defended at all—on no other plea than that of temporary expediency, which has been the defence offered through all time for derelictions otherwise inexcusable. It was a serious political offence, and has ever since formed a ground of attack against those who committed it. An attempt has been made to excuse Mr. Macdonald's participation therein upon the ground that he all along disapproved of it; that he opposed it at the Council Board, and only consented to it at last because, like the unjust judge in Scripture, he was wearied by continual importunity; the importunity, of course, proceeding from his colleagues. The apology reminds one of Pembroke's dictum, in *King John:*

> "Oftentimes excusing of a fault
> Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse."

The most culpable of all offences are those which are committed against light and knowledge. Whoso knoweth his lord's will and doeth it not shall be beaten with many stripes. Mr. Macdonald, as the leading spirit of the Government of that day, is entitled to bear

*See Dominion Statute of 1878, chap. 5, sec. 3, which is an adaptation of the Provincial (Ontario) Statute 1868-9, chap. 4, sec. 7.

his full share of responsibility for the Double Shuffle, and the weight cannot be shifted from his shoulders by any evasion on the score of expediency. An equally potent excuse might be found for some of the darkest crimes in the calendar. The true hero is not the man who never knew fear, but the man who, fearing greatly, yet demeans himself valiantly. The palm for true bravery is due to the man who grows pale at the dangers lying in his path, and who yet, because he knows it to be his duty, proceeds on his way, and nobly fronts the danger. So with statesmanship. The true statesman is the man who, fully appreciating all the risk of a particular course, nevertheless adopts that course and persists in it because he knows it to be the right one. The rule inculcating a different line of conduct is not statesmanship, but Machiavelism. And with these condemnatory remarks the writer is very glad to dismiss the subject from his pages.

The reconstructed Government found themselves supported by a considerable majority. Mr. Cartier announced their policy to be the same as had been foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the session; but he added that in view of the recent vote on the Seat of Government question, the new Ministry did not feel themselves warranted in incurring an expenditure for public buildings until Parliament should have an opportunity of reconsidering the subject. It was further announced that the expediency of a federation of the British North American Provinces would be anxiously considered; that communication with the Home Government and the Maritime Provinces on the subject would forthwith be entered into; and that the result would be submitted to Parliament at a future session. The repudiation of the double-majority principle had increased the agitation in Upper Canada on the subject of Representation by Population, and the idea of a general federation of the Provinces had presented itself to the minds of several of our leading statesmen as a possible solution of the problem which stared the country in the face. Mr. Galt, as has been seen, had already brought the subject before the

Assembly; and upon his entry into the Government he insisted upon its being taken up as a Cabinet question. Hence Mr. Cartier's announcement of it as a plank in the ministerial platform. It may here be added that the promises made on behalf of the Government in this particular were redeemed, but no decisive action was taken for some time thereafter, in consequence of the resignation of the Derby Government, which took place in June of the following year.

The session had already lasted more than five months, and the legislative and other necessary business was carried through to a speedy close. A number of important measures passed their third reading; others were dropped, to be heard of no more. It should here be mentioned that the question of "Protection to Home Industries" first came before a Canadian Parliament as a matter for Provincial legislation during the session of 1858. It was introduced by Mr. Cayley in connection with certain amendments to the tariff, and was rendered necessary by the unsatisfactory state of the revenue. Rates of 20 and 25 per cent. were imposed upon certain commodities, and a general rate of 15 per cent. on all articles not specially enumerated or exempted. The tariff of the following year, which is frequently referred to as the beginning of Canadian protection, was merely "an enlargement and expansion" of that of 1858.*

Parliament was prorogued on the 16th of August. Within a few weeks afterwards all the members of the late Brown-Dorion Government had been reëlected, as had also the new ministers, Messieurs Galt and Sherwood. During the progress of the late session, Mr. Brown, who, it will be remembered, had been returned for two constituencies, elected to sit for Toronto. North Oxford being thus left unrepresented, Mr. William McDougall, who was backed by Mr. Brown's influence, was returned for that constituency by a considerable majority over the ministerial candidate, Mr. J. C. Morrison. Mr. McDougall had been used by his party as a sort of forlorn hope, and had been defeated in several constituencies; but his

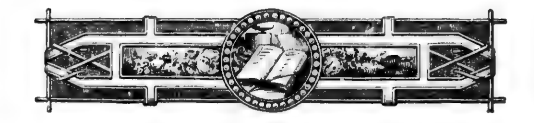
*See the Introduction to Mr. John Maclean's "Tariff Hand-Book."

perseverance at last met its reward, and he has ever since been conspicuous among our public men. His election took place in May, so that he was able to take his seat in Parliament several months before the close of the session. He took a prominent part in the debates arising out of the exciting questions which agitated the Assembly during the last few weeks of the session, and was an undoubted accession to the Opposition ranks.

The month of August was signalized by the completion of telegraphic communication between Europe and America; but scarcely had the first international messages of congratulation been transmitted ere the communication was interrupted in consequence of the inefficient manner in which the cable had been laid, and years were yet to elapse before the two continents were to be permanently brought into that intimate relation which now subsists between them. The year was also rendered noteworthy by the raising of the 100th Regiment in Canada, as an addition to the regular army of Great Britain; and by the death of Robert Baldwin on the 9th of December—an event which has been recorded on a former page.*

The only ministerial changes which marked the close of the year consisted of the withdrawal of Mr. Sicotte, whose retirement was due to a difference with his colleagues on the subject of the Seat of Government. He was of opinion that, in consequence of the vote in the Assembly on the 28th of the preceding July, the Government were not bound to act upon the Imperial decision in favour of Ottawa. In this view the other members of the Ministry could not concur, and Mr. Sicotte accordingly retired on the 24th of December. He was succeeded in the Commissionership of Public Works by Mr. Rose, who assumed office on the 11th of January following. The Solicitor-Generalship for Lower Canada thenceforward remained vacant throughout the year 1859; so that, except during the first ten days of January, there was no Solicitor-General for either section of the Province during that year.

* *Ante*, Vol. II., p. 244.



Chapter XXXVIII.

THE EVE OF CONFEDERATION.

"What then is the remedy best adapted to deliver the Province from the disastrous position it now occupies? We answer: Dissolve the existing Legislative Union. Divide Canada into two or more Provinces, with local Executives and Legislatures having entire control over every public interest—except those, and those only, that are necessarily common to all parts of the Province. . . Establish some central authority over all, with power to administer such matters, and such only, as are necessarily common to the whole Province. Let the functions of this central authority be clearly laid down—let its powers be strictly confined to discharging specified duties. Prohibit it from incurring any new debt, or levying more taxation than is required to meet the interest of existing obligations, discharge its own specified duties, and gradually pay off the national debt. Secure these rights by a written Constitution, ratified by the people, and incapable of alteration except by their formal sanction."—Address of the Constitutional Reform Association to the People of Upper Canada, *dated at Toronto, February 15th, 1860.*

HE hard times, though they had spent their worst fury, had by no means wholly passed away, and the advent of 1859 found the Province still struggling with a considerable amount of business depression. Parliament had been summoned for an earlier date than usual, and met on the 29th of January. It remained in session until the 4th of May. The Government commanded a fair majority on matters of general policy, though the Opposition presented a most determined front, and though the session was marked by several exciting debates. In the Speech from the Throne pronounced at the opening, the attention of the Houses was specially drawn to the Seat of Government question. "I cannot doubt," remarked his Excellency, "that you will recognize a selection made by Her Majesty at your own request, and that you will duly acknowledge her gracious compli-

ance with the addresses which you yourselves caused to be presented to her." The Address in Reply echoed this sentiment, which, however, did not meet with anything like universal acceptance in Parliament. Various amendments were proposed, and the ensuing discussions evoked strong expressions of disapproval at the choice of Ottawa; but the Government stood to their guns, and the disputed clause was carried by a narrow majority of five. The vexed question of the Seat of Government was thus disposed of.*

Among the most important of the 131† measures passed during the session were an Act to amend and consolidate the several Acts respecting the Public Works, and a new Tariff Act. The latter, as already mentioned, was an expansion of the measure of the previous session, and the principal change effected by it was the imposition of twenty—instead of fifteen—per cent. on all commodities not specifically enumerated. Its introduction devolved, of course, upon the new Inspector-General, Mr. Galt, who made an able exposition of the Provincial finance on the occasion. The thin end of the wedge of Protection was by this time clearly inserted; but the responsibility for its insertion rests neither upon Mr. Cayley, who introduced the measure of 1858, nor upon Mr. Galt, who introduced that of 1859. The real author of Canadian Protection was Mr. Isaac Buchanan, of Hamilton, whose active interest in trade questions has already been referred to, and who for some time prior to 1859 had been doing his utmost to disseminate views in opposition to the alleged principles of free-trade. By his frequent contributions to the press, and by his personal influence, Mr. Buchanan had won many converts to his opinions, more especially among the wholesale mercantile community of

* The selection of Ottawa, though nominally the Act of Her Majesty, was made upon the advice of Sir Edmund Head, who feared a disruption of the Union on the Seat of Government question, and regarded Ottawa as a sort of compromise between the rival claims of the two sections of the Province. See *ante*, p. 367.

† Exclusive of a divorce bill reserved for Imperial sanction.

Canada. The latter had recognized the importance of united action, and had held public meetings in Toronto and Montreal, at which economical questions had been freely discussed, and resolutions passed in favour of such a readjustment of the tariff as would afford greater encouragement to Home manufactures. Mr. Buchanan had never failed to attend these meetings, and to make his presence felt thereat. Petitions, numerously signed, had been presented to the Assembly on the subject, and a new scale of customs rates, prepared by Mr. Buchanan himself, had been submitted to the Inspector-General, accompanied by strong arguments for its adoption. By these and other means a good deal of pressure had been brought to bear upon the Government. The Tariff Acts of 1858 and 1859 were largely due to this pressure, and the effect of the "national policy" soon began to make itself perceptibly felt in an improved state of the revenue. The consequences of the reckless expenditure of past years could not be remedied in a moment, but there was a marked improvement from the time of Mr. Galt's accession to office. His high character and great financial ability did much to restore public confidence, and his efforts were greatly promoted in the course of the year by a bountiful harvest. The Tariff Act of 1859, however, was probably the most important factor in enabling Mr. Galt, in his next annual report, to show an increase of revenue over expenditure; and of that Act, as has been seen, Mr. Buchanan is entitled to claim at least a full share of parentage.

Two other Acts passed during the session of 1859 call for a few words of mention. The first made provision for facilitating the redemption of Provincial debentures, and the consolidation of the public debt. It abolished the name of "Inspector-General," as applied to the head of the Department of Finance, and substituted therefor the title of "Minister of Finance," by which that official has ever since been designated. The other measure above referred to, which was introduced and carried through the Assembly under the

auspices of Attorney-General Cartier, made an effectual disposition of the Seigniorial Tenure question, by appropriating a sum for the redemption of certain feudal obligations which, notwithstanding the provision made by the Act of 1854, still pressed upon the *habitans* of Lower Canada. The appropriation was opposed with great firmness by the Upper Canadian Opposition, who denounced it as an attempted robbery of the western section of the Province. The Lower Canadians, however, took an equally determined stand in its favour, only one* of their number being found to refuse his support, and the Act passed its third reading in the Assembly by a vote of 66 to 28. In the Upper House it was subjected to certain amendments, which were agreed to by the Assembly, and it accordingly became law. Though it got rid of a grievance of long standing, the Upper Canadian Clear Grits could not bring themselves to regard it otherwise than as a gross injustice to their own section. "Can we long continue," asked their chief organ, "in connection with a people with whom we differ so widely as we do with the French Canadians?"† The stand taken respectively by the Clear Grits and Rouges at this juncture caused a breach between them which was never wholly repaired, and which, by disorganizing the Opposition, tended to strengthen the hands of the Government.

As the session drew towards its close a temporary conflict arose between the two Houses in consequence of the refusal of the Legislative Council to adopt the Supply Bill. Parliament having by this time met at Toronto for four successive years, arrangements had been made for removing the Seat of Government to Quebec at the close of the current session, where it was to remain until new buildings should be erected at Ottawa. During the debate on the Address in the Upper House, a majority of members had pro-

* Mr. R. B. Somerville, member for Huntingdon.

† See *The Globe*, Thursday, May 5th, 1859.

nounced against the contemplated removal, which they regarded as an unnecessary expense. They had contended for retaining the capital at Toronto until it could be finally removed to Ottawa, by which means a good deal of cost to the country would be avoided. They accordingly now refused to pass an item to defray the expense of removal, which had been placed in the Supply Bill; but when they found that their persistence would inevitably bring about a crisis they gave way, and relieved the Government from an embarrassing position. Among other proceedings which marked the close of the session was the passing by both Houses of an Address to the Queen praying that Her Majesty, accompanied by the Prince Consort and such members of the royal family as might be selected to attend her on the occasion, would "graciously deign to be present," at the opening, in the following year, of the Victoria Bridge across the St. Lawrence River at Montreal. Mr. Henry Smith, Speaker of the Assembly, was despatched to England to present the Address, and to receive Her Majesty's reply, the tenor of which will be given in the proper place.

Immediately after the prorogation the departments were removed to Quebec, where they were destined to remain six years before being permanently installed at Ottawa.* Notices were issued by the Public Works Department inviting architects to send in designs for the proposed Parliament Buildings to be erected at the new capital. The invitations were numerously responded to, and in the course of the autumn specifications were prepared and building contracts entered into. Before the close of the year operations were begun upon the Central Block, and the work of construction was thenceforward continued without serious interruption until completion.

The demand for Representation by Population assumed formidable

* The public offices were removed from Quebec to Ottawa in 1865, but no session of the Legislature was held at the present capital until 1866.

proportions in Upper Canada during the summer of 1859. The Government were notoriously in a minority in that section of the Province, and as they had abandoned the double-majority principle, the cry of "Lower Canadian domination" began to be loudly raised against them. During the second week of November an additional impetus was imparted to this sentiment by means of a numerously attended Reform Convention held at Toronto. The avowed object of the Convention, which was attended by 570 prominent Reformers, including delegates from all parts of the Upper Province, was "to consider the relations between Upper and Lower Canada, and the financial and political evils that had resulted therefrom, and to devise constitutional changes fitted to remedy the said abuses, and to secure good government for the Province." * All the leading spirits of the Upper Canadian Opposition were present at this gathering, and delivered stirring diatribes against the Ministry. A series of strongly-drawn resolutions was passed, declaring, *inter alia,* that the Union of the Provinces had failed to realize the anticipations of its promoters; that it had resulted in a heavy public debt, burdensome taxation, great political abuses, and universal dissatisfaction throughout Upper Canada. Opinions were generally expressed to the effect that the Union, as then existing, could no longer be continued with advantage to the people, and that the difficulties in the way of bringing about a Federal Union of all the British North American colonies would necessarily cause such delay as to place that measure beyond consideration as a remedy for existing evils. It was further resolved that the best practical remedy was to be found in the formation of two or more local governments having control over all sectional matters, and of some joint authority having control of matters common to the Province at large. The final resolution declared that no govern-

* See the recital introduced into the circular issued to the Reform members and candidates by the Reform Association of Upper Canada in 1867.

ment would be satisfactory to the people of Upper Canada unless based on the principle of Representation by Population. A "Constitutional Reform Association" was formed for the purpose of carrying out the spirit of these resolutions, and of procuring the election to Parliament of candidates pledged to the principles enumerated therein. A committee was appointed to draft an address to the people in support of the prevalent views of the Convention, and embodying the resolutions *in extenso*. Great care was manifested in the preparation of this document, which was not fully completed and approved until the 15th of February, 1860. It contained an elaborate exposition of public affairs from the Opposition point of view, and was circulated broadcast throughout the land. There can be no doubt that it did much to pave the way for the great scheme of Confederation—a fact which will be clearly apparent to anyone who will take the trouble to compare the text of the resolutions of 1859 with the British North America Act of 1867. Its immediate effect, however, was not very apparent. The scheme was too large, and at the same time too indefinite, for ready and general comprehension, and many staunch Upper Canadian Reformers would have nothing to say to it. Among other less important personages, Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald refused to have act or part in so radical an inroad upon the constitution as would necessarily be involved in carrying out the resolutions of the Convention.

A similar movement was set on foot in Montreal under the auspices of Messieurs Dorion, Drummond, McGee, and other influential members of the Opposition. Meetings were held, at which the situation of affairs was very freely discussed, and the project of a Federal Union cordially approved. But a good many Oppositionists held aloof, owing to their unconquerable antipathy to Mr. Brown; and upon the whole the movement made little headway in Lower Canada. The several differences among the members of

the Opposition inevitably tended to prevent united action among them on matters of general policy, and the Government of course profited by the disorganization of their opponents.

There were no other events of historical importance during the year 1859. Early in 1860 the offices of Solicitor-General East and West, both of which had long been vacant,* were filled by the appointment of Messieurs Louis Siméon Morin and J. C. Morrison. Mr. Morin, who sat in the Assembly for Terrebonne, was a member of the Lower Canada bar, and though a young man of only twenty-eight years, he had already made his presence felt in the Assembly by his talents as a speaker and general man of business. He assumed the office of Solicitor-General for Lower Canada on the 18th of January, and was at the same time admitted to a seat in the Cabinet. Within a month afterwards he was reëlected by his constituents, and he continued for more than two years to hold the office to which he had been appointed. Mr. Morrison, who is already known to the reader, had no seat in Parliament. He became Solicitor-General West on the 22nd of February, 1860, and held that office, with a seat in the Cabinet, until the month of March, 1862, without having meanwhile been returned for any constituency.

The session of 1860 was opened at Quebec on Tuesday, the 28th of February. A despatch from the Duke of Newcastle, Colonia Secretary, which had been received by the Governor-General only a few days before, was laid before Parliament. It announced the receipt by Her Majesty of the joint Address of the two Houses of the Canadian Legislature, and testified her appreciation of the loyal spirit which had inspired it. Regret was expressed that Her Majesty's duties at the Seat of Empire were such as to preclude her acceptance of the invitation to be present at the opening of the Victoria Bridge. "Impressed, however," wrote the Secretary, "with an earnest desire to testify, to the utmost of her power, her warm

* *Ante*, pp. 385, 390.

appreciation of the affectionate loyalty of her Canadian subjects, the Queen commands me to express her hope that when the time for the opening of the bridge is fixed, it may be possible for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to attend the ceremony in Her Majesty's name, and to witness those gratifying scenes in which the Queen is herself unable to participate. The Queen trusts that nothing may interfere with this arrangement, for it is Her Majesty's sincere desire that the young Prince, on whom the Crown of this Empire will devolve, may have the opportunity of visiting that portion of her dominions from which this Address has proceeded, and may become acquainted with a people in whose rapid progress towards greatness Her Majesty, in common with her subjects in Great Britain, feels a lively and enduring sympathy." The Governor, in the opening Speech, after referring to this despatch, and to various other matters of temporary importance, remarked upon the improved aspect of the finances. "If I may not congratulate you," said his Excellency, "upon having completely surmounted our financial difficulties, I think you will find that the income and expenditure for the past year have been such as to cause us no fear for the future." The abundant harvest and the signs of a revival of trade were also touched upon. In a word, the tone of the Speech was decidedly hopeful, and was fully justified by the commercial outlook. The Address in Reply was passed by each House at a single sitting, and with very little discussion.

The legislation of 1860, though it included various measures of practical utility, was not of such a nature as to call for special reference here. All through the session the Ministry were sustained by considerable majorities, and were strong, rather by reason of the weakness and disorganization of their adversaries than from any inherent strength of their own. Mr. (J. A.) Macdonald still continued to carry Upper Canada measures by means of majorities obtained from Lower Canada, and for this he encountered considerable censure

in his own section; but upon any question which involved the existence of the Ministry he could always count upon his colleague Mr. Cartier, and the Opposition could do little to break down the forces arrayed against them. Owing to the secession of some of his followers and the lukewarm support of others, Mr. Brown's influence perceptibly waned during the session. A number of Lower Canadian Liberals positively refused to follow his lead any longer, and Major Thomas Edmund Campbell, member for Rouville, in the course of a speech in the Assembly, publicly called upon him to relinquish the leadership of a party with which French Canadians could never unite while he remained at its head. Still, in spite of all defections, Mr. Brown never ceased to be formidable. No sooner had the Assembly fairly settled down to business, after passing the Address in Reply, than he began to develop the policy outlined in the resolutions of the Toronto Convention. He introduced two motions embodying all the most important principles which had been resolved upon: namely, that the Union was a failure, and could not be advantageously maintained; and that the best remedy was to be found in the formation of two or more local governments, with some joint authority, "charged with such matters as are necessarily common to both sections of the Province." These motions, which were seconded by Mr. Mowat, naturally gave rise to stirring debates, and evoked strong expressions of opinion. Mr. Brown supported them by the most eloquent and statesmanlike speech that up to that time had ever fallen from his lips. They were however defeated by overwhelming majorities; the former by 66 to 27, the latter by 74 to 32. There was a manifest disposition to laugh at Mr. Brown's schemes as the visionary imaginings of a disappointed man. The joint authority scheme gave occasion to some specially facetious remarks, and one speaker declared that the bee in Mr. Brown's bonnet must be of more portentous dimensions than the bonnet itself. But the whirligig of time brings its revenges. The day

was not far distant when this identical joint authority scheme was to commend itself to the mature intelligence of the ablest statesmen of two continents, as the true and only remedy for a dead-lock in Canadian public affairs.

After having sat for not quite three months, Parliament was prorogued on the 19th of May, upon the understanding that the members should reassemble to welcome the Prince of Wales upon his arrival at Quebec in the course of the summer. During the next three months the country was agog with expectation. Never had the promised advent of any human being been looked forward to in Canada with such enthusiasm; nor was this much to be wondered at, for the expected visitor was not merely the representative of Her Majesty, but the heir-apparent to the British throne. Whatever may be the case at the present day, loyalty was not an effete sentiment in Canada twenty-two years ago, and all classes of the people vied with each other to do honour to the winsome young man who represented the might and majesty of the Imperial Crown. Nor were there any personal grounds for abating the love and respect which such a guest was well calculated to inspire. Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, was then "in the morn and liquid dew of youth." He was endowed with an attractive person and a manner becoming to his high rank. His reputation was unclouded. Scandal had not busied itself with his name; or if it had, the sound had not been borne across the Atlantic. Everything that was known about him was in his favour, and the opinions currently entertained of him were golden. Then, there was a less elevated aspect in which it was possible to look at the matter. Regarded from a purely selfish point of view, the visit of so distinguished a personage was certain to be advantageous to Canada as an advertisement, and the eyes of the world would be at least temporarily directed to our shores. The preparations for His Royal Highness's reception were of the most elaborate and costly character in all the principal cities and towns

Parliament had made liberal provision for the emergency, and this provision was liberally supplemented by the local corporations.

The Prince, accompanied by the Duke of Newcastle, Colonial Secretary, and a numerous suite, sailed from Plymouth on the 10th of July. A fortnight later they landed at St. John's, Newfoundland, whence, after remaining several days, they proceeded to Halifax, Nova Scotia. St. John and Fredericton, the two principal towns of New Brunswick, were next visited, after which the party proceeded to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Thence they embarked for Canada. At Gaspé they were met by the Governor-General and nearly all the members of the Ministry, who had proceeded thither to welcome the royal guest. The reception at Quebec took place on the 18th of August. On the 21st the two branches of the Legislature presented to His Royal Highness addresses expressive of devoted attachment to the person and Crown of his royal mother. By letters patent received from England subsequent to his arrival in this country, the Prince had been created Viceroy of all the British North American colonies, and by virtue of the creation he was empowered to confer the honour of knighthood. This power he now exercised by investing Messieurs N. F. Belleau and Henry Smith* with that dignity. On the 25th he discharged the task which had formed the pretext for his visit, by laying the corner stone of the Victoria Bridge at Montreal.† A week afterwards he laid the foundation stone of the projected Parliament Houses at Ottawa, whence he proceeded through the western part of the Province, visiting all the principal cities and towns along the route. His journey from first to last was an uninterrupted series of ovations. Great taste was displayed and much

* Speakers respectively of the two Houses of Parliament.

†It may be worth noting that the Reception Committee at Montreal was presided over by the Hon. John Young, who nearly nineteen years before had endeavoured to give a practical and philanthropical direction to the local celebration in honour of the Prince of Wales's birth. See *ante*, Vol. I., p. 216. The facts were communicated to H.R.H., who gracefully referred to Mr. Young's conduct on the occasion.

money spent in decorating and illuminating the streets, and Western Canada has probably never presented so charming an aspect as during those few weeks of the royal progress through our territory. At three points only did anything occur to mar the harmony of the receptions. The unwise display of party emblems by the Orange Societies of Kingston and Belleville prevented the royal visitors from landing from the steamer at either of those places. In Toronto a similar exhibition of Orange devices upon one of the triumphal arches erected on the corner of Church and King Streets prevented the royal procession from passing under it, the Duke of Newcastle firmly refusing to lend any countenance to party displays. The Governor-General having expressed himself strongly in favour of his Grace's determination, both he and the Colonial Secretary were burned in effigy on Colborne Street by a few hot-headed persons whose zeal, for the nonce, outran their discretion. In every other particular the visit to Toronto was a splendid success, and during the rest of the western tour all went merrily as the proverbial marriage bell.

Before the Prince's departure from England, President Buchanan had written to Her Majesty offering a cordial welcome to her son and heir in the event of the latter extending his visit to the United States. Her Majesty had replied accepting the invitation, and accordingly, when His Royal Highness had completed his tour through the western peninsula of Canada, he passed over to the States at Detroit. Thence he proceeded through the principal cities of the Union, and visited the President at Washington early in October. In the republic, as in Canada, he was treated as an honoured guest. The Duke of Newcastle expressed his belief that the Prince's visit to the States had done more to cement the good feeling between the two countries than could have been effected by a quarter of a century of diplomacy. Subsequent events were soon to put this alleged good feeling to the test, and, as will be seen, it

proved to be not deeply rooted. The Prince bade adieu to America on the 20th of October, when he embarked at Portland for Plymouth, whither he arrived, after a long and tedious voyage, on the 15th of November.

Our land had been blessed with another abundant harvest, and the year had also been marked by a steady improvement in trade. The Province had by this time surmounted the crisis of 1857. Business was brisk, and the general outlook was decidedly encouraging. The question of a Federal Union continued to make itself heard from time to time, one of its most eloquent advocates being Mr. McGee, who still acted in unison with Mr. Brown. As the year drew towards its close the famous Anderson extradition case attracted a good deal of attention on both sides of the Atlantic, and even threatened, for a time, to produce a conflict of authority between the courts of law in Canada and those of Great Britain. The case arose out of the following circumstances. On the 28th of September, 1853, a coloured slave named John Anderson, in escaping from bondage, in Howard County, Missouri, slew one Seneca T. P. Diggs, who sought to capture him with the intention of delivering him over to his master. The slave made good his escape, and in course of time reached Canada, where, on the 30th of April, 1860—between six and seven years after the event—he was recognized by a slave-catcher who had tracked him hither. He was straightway arrested for the alleged murder, with a view to his extradition under the Ashburton Treaty. His cause was at once taken up by the public and the press of Canada. Meetings were held in various parts of the Province, and funds were liberally subscribed to test the legality of his proposed extradition. The excitement soon spread to the United States, and even to Great Britain. In the following Michaelmas Term the prisoner was brought up on a writ of *habeas corpus* before the Court of Queen's Bench, at Toronto, where the case was argued with consummate ability on both sides.

Sir John Beverley Robinson, Chief Justice of the Court, decided that the prisoner must be surrendered. Mr. Justice McLean, one of the puisné judges, dissented from this view. He held that the prisoner was entitled to his discharge, upon the ground that slavery is not recognized by the law of Canada; that a slave who has escaped from bondage is entitled to defend himself, even to the death, against recapture; and that the case under consideration did not come within the provisions of the treaty. As the other puisné judge, Mr. Justice Burns, concurred with his chief, the judgment of the Court was pronounced accordingly. The public voice was loudly raised against this decision, which was currently supposed to be a quasi-recognition of slavery. It seemed monstrous that a Canadian court of justice should pronounce a practical condemnation upon a man for merely opposing to the death an attempt to rob him of that liberty which is the common birthright of humanity. As matter of fact, the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench implied no such condemnation, and had no reference to the rights or wrongs of slavery, but was the result of a careful consideration of the terms of the treaty and the law applicable to the case. The friends of true liberty on both sides of the Atlantic, however, determined that the fugitive should not be delivered over to the lash of the slave-driver, and to probable death, until every available means of saving him from such a fate had been exhausted. Application for a writ of *habeas corpus* was made to the Court of Queen's Bench at Westminster. After some hesitation the writ was granted, but before it could be executed a similar process had issued from the Court of Common Pleas in Canada. That Court did not find it necessary to enter into the merits of the question, but discharged the prisoner upon a technicality. The leading journals of England and Canada devoted much space to discussing the question of jurisdiction of the courts at Westminster and Toronto respectively, and there was a manifest disposition on the part of the conductors of

the legal periodicals in this Province to tolerate no dictation from the English tribunal. A succession of articles also appeared in some of the secular journals to a similar purport; but the discharge of the prisoner rendered unnecessary the further continuance of the discussion.*

During the autumn of 1860 several changes of more or less importance occurred in the composition of the two branches of the Legislature, by reason of the biennial election of Legislative Councillors which then took place. Mr. Merritt, who had represented the constituency in which he resided ever since the Union, resigned his seat in order to admit of his being elected to the Upper House for the Niagara Division. He was returned by acclamation, and he continued to sit in the Legislative Council for that Division until his death, in July, 1862. His successor in the representation of Lincoln in the Assembly was Mr. John Charles Rykert. Mr. A. J. Fergusson-Blair,† who had respectively represented Waterloo and South Wellington in the Assembly, but who for several years past had remained out of public life, was elected to the Upper House for the Brock Division. Malcolm Cameron was returned for the St. Clair Division, and was succeeded as Lambton's representative in the Lower House by Mr. Hope F. Mackenzie. Mr. Letellier,‡ a former representative of Kamouraska in the Assembly, was returned for the Grandville Division. Another change, not due to the biennial election, may here be noted. Colonel Prince, by accepting an appointment as Judge of the District of Algoma, had vacated his seat in the Legislative Council, where he had represented the Western Division ever since 1856. The vacancy was filled by the election of Sir Allan MacNab. The knight had been created a baronet soon after his retirement from the Ministry in 1856, and during the following year he had withdrawn from the representation of Hamilton in the Assembly. He had not since taken any part in public life, but

* See *post*, p. 408, and *note* (‡). † *Ante*, pp. 133, 134. ‡ *Ante*, p. 254.

had spent a considerable part of the interval in England, where he had intended to pass the remainder of his days, and where he had been an unsuccessful candidate for a seat in the House of Commons. He had returned to Canada in the spring of 1860, and upon Colonel Prince's acceptance of the judgeship, Sir Allan was prevailed upon to become a candidate for the seat thus rendered vacant. Before the election he received the honorary rank of a Colonel in the British army, and was appointed an honorary aide-de-camp to the Queen.* When the election came off in November he was returned at the head of the poll, and he in due course took his seat in the Upper House, where we shall erelong meet him once more.

On the 12th of October the Governor-General, having made arrangements to pay a second visit to England, temporarily committed the administration of affairs to the hands of Lieutenant-General Sir William Fenwick Williams, the gallant hero of Kars, who had succeeded to the post of Commander of the Forces. His Excellency was absent from the Province somewhat more than three months, and did not resume charge of the Government until the 22nd of February following. Commerce continued to thrive throughout the Province, and at the setting-in of the year 1861 the land was in a full tide of prosperity. Meanwhile the dark cloud which had long been hovering over the United States began to give out unmistakable symptoms of having nearly reached the bursting point, and ere the Canadian Parliament met to hold its next annual session the republic was already on the brink of the most terrible rebellion the world has ever seen. The conflict was destined to produce important results in Canada, but at this early date results were very dimly foreseen, and though we all felt an interest in the impending struggle,

*Similar dignities were at the same time conferred upon Sir Etienne Pascal Taché—heretofore known to us as *Colonel* Taché—and in the capacity of aides-de-camp both gentlemen attended the Prince of Wales during his progress through the country in the summer and autumn.

we failed to realize its full significance, and had little idea that it would be prolonged beyond the ninety days which were currently assigned as its utmost duration. Our people entertained wide differences of opinion as to the merits of the struggle, but there was an unquestionable preponderance of what was termed "Southern sympathy," accompanied by a corresponding sentiment of hostility towards the cause of the North. As will presently be seen, only a few months were to elapse ere an unlooked-for complication was to intensify this latter sentiment to an uncommon degree.

The Sixth Parliament assembled at Quebec for its fourth and last session on the 16th of March, 1861. Reference was made in the opening Speech to the abundant harvest of the preceding year, to an acknowledgment by Her Majesty of the loyalty which had been displayed towards the Prince during his visit, and to the promulgation of the Consolidated Statutes of Upper and Lower Canada.* Attention was also directed to the service in Canada of a writ issued by the Court of Queen's Bench in England,† and his Excellency announced that he had been advised to represent to the Home Government the expediency of preventing, by legislation in Great Britain, any possible conflict of jurisdiction.‡ Long and acrimonious debates arose in the Assembly on the Address in Reply, and various amendments embodying practical censure upon the Ministry

* Commissioners for the consolidation of the statutes of the two sections of the Province, as well as those of the Province at large, had been appointed in 1856. Those appointed to deal with the statutes of Upper Canada and Canada respectively completed the consolidations in 1859, when their labours received legislative sanction. The Commissioners for the Lower Canada statutes did not conclude their task until January, 1861, when *Les Statuts Refondus du Bas-Canada* were brought into force by virtue of an enabling Act of the preceding session.

† In the Anderson case.

‡ The suggestion was acted upon in 1862, when the Imperial Parliament passed an Act (25 Vic., c. 20) providing that no writ of *habeas corpus* shall issue out of any court in England to any colony or foreign dominion of the Crown in which any courts exist having power to issue and ensure the due execution of such writs.

were proposed. Mr. Thomas R. Ferguson, member for South Simcoe, moved an amendment expressing regret that, owing to the unwise counsel tendered to the Prince of Wales, the feelings of large classes of Her Majesty's subjects had been insulted, their rights ignored, and much political and religious excitement engendered, "detrimental alike to the peace of the country and that full and unreserved equality of the rights and privileges which all classes of the people should constitutionally enjoy." Mr. Macdougall moved an amendment on the same subject, but still more directly expressive of censure upon the Government. The persons who were said to have been insulted were the Orangemen, who had not been allowed to pay their respects to the Prince in their own way; and the persons whose rights were said to have been ignored were the Freemasons, who had been invited to lay the corner stone of the Parliamentary Buildings at Ottawa with masonic honours, but had not been permitted to do so. The supporters of these amendments were confined to a few members of the Upper Canadian Opposition, though several Lower Canadians, in the course of their remarks in the House, expressed opinions to the effect that the Ministry were responsible for the ill-feeling that had been produced in the country. The Government, however, repudiated all responsibility for the acts of the Duke of Newcastle, who had had charge of the Prince of Wales's expedition. "Our duty," they said, in effect, "is to advise the Governor-General on the affairs of the Province, and we do not profess to interfere in matters of Imperial diplomacy. The Prince, during his stay in Canada, was the Queen's representative. He was sent over here accompanied by an Imperial adviser, by whom he was guided, and who alone is answerable for what was done." The votes on the two amendments stood 85 to 14 and 71 to 29 respectively in favour of the Ministry. Another amendment moved by Mr. Ferguson assertive of the Representation by Population principle obtained 38 supporters out of a House of 110. Still other amendments by

Messieurs J. S. Macdonald and A. A. Dorion, assertive of the double majority principle,* divided the House much less disproportionately, the respective votes standing 62 to 49 and 65 to 46. The majorities of 13 and 19 declared by these votes might therefore be taken as indications of the actual strength of the Government; but it was an ominous circumstance that among the minority were to be found the names of Messieurs Sicotte and Loranger, two of the ablest public men in Lower Canada, both of whom had formerly been firm supporters of Mr. Cartier. Their secession, which was chiefly attributable to their disinclination to accept the official determination to accept the Imperial mandate making Ottawa the permanent Seat of Government, was a blow to the Ministry, as each of the seceders had a certain following in the House. About this time a tendency to united action began to manifest itself between them and the moderate Reformers of Upper Canada. The chief representative of the latter was J. S. Macdonald, between whom and Mr. Brown there had been steadily-widening differences ever since the formation of the two days' Ministry in 1858. Mr. Brown's star had not been in the ascendant since the defeat of his joint authority resolutions during the session of 1860. There had been defections from his ranks in Upper Canada, and in Lower Canada he cannot be said to have had any following whatever. Messieurs Sicotte and Loranger, willing as they were to ally themselves with J. S. Macdonald, knew perfectly well that their constituents and fellow-countrymen would

* The seeming contradiction between this statement and that on p. 369 requires a word of explanation. It is there stated that: "From that time forward (*i.e.*, in 1858) the question of a double or sectional majority cannot be said to have ever presented itself before the Canadian Parliament as a matter for practical consideration." The anomaly here is to be explained by the simple statement that Messieurs Macdonald and Dorion did not introduce the double majority question in 1861 with any idea of carrying it, but merely for the purpose of testing the ministerial strength. So that as matter of fact the question did not really come before Parliament "as a matter for practical consideration." The subsequent adoption of the principle by the Macdonald-Sicotte Government in 1862 was merely nominal, as when the time came for acting upon it it was thrown overboard, and that without any serious attempt at explanation.—See *post*, p. 429.

not tolerate an alliance between them and Mr. Brown. Even the great ability and popularity of Mr. Dorion could not stand the pressure brought to bear upon his alliance with the Chief of the Clear Grits. He was erelong superseded in the leadership of the Lower Canadian Opposition by Mr. Sicotte, who contrived to get together a strong support in the Assembly, including Messieurs Drummond, Loranger and Lemieux. The alliance between Mr. Sicotte and Mr. J. S. Macdonald soon became a *fait accompli,* and their united strength rendered necessary the utmost vigilance and finesse on the part of the Ministry. The latter, however, though frequently embarrassed, got through the session, a great portion of which was taken up by discussions concerning the representation. A census had been taken a few weeks before the opening, and after the Easter recess a synopsis of the returns was laid before the Assembly. It showed that whereas in 1841 the population of Lower Canada had been more than 200,000 in excess of that of the upper section of the Province, the latter now contained nearly 300,000 more people than the former. The logic of these figures was inexorable, and gave additional vigour to the agitation for representation according to population. Hence the numerous discussions on that subject. The most important of them ensued upon a Bill introduced by the member for South Simcoe, already mentioned, which contemplated a sort of modified representation by population. Every conspicuous member of the House took part in the debate, and Mr. John A. Macdonald made a most eloquent and telling speech against the proposed measure. Mr. Cartier took an uncompromising stand, declaring that under the Union Act Upper Canada had no right to a larger representation than Lower Canada, and that he would never consent to sacrifice the claims of the latter by so much as a hair's-breadth. In so arguing the Premier proved himself to be devoid of political prescience. The next few years taught him much, but he learned nothing on this important question until knowledge was

imperatively forced upon him.* The measure was defeated by a vote of 67 to 49, a considerable number of Upper Canadian members voting against it. Various motions of want of confidence in the Administration were introduced by the Opposition, not with any distinct idea that they could be successful, but merely for the purpose of embarrassing the Ministry, and of producing an effect upon the country at large with a view to the general elections which were to be held in the course of the year. An effective point was made against the Government for having made advances to the Grand Trunk Railway without legislative authority. Considerable stress was also laid upon the fact that Mr. Morrison, who had held the office of Solicitor-General West ever since his appointment in February, 1860, had not succeeded in obtaining a seat in either House of Parliament, but had on the contrary been defeated as a candidate for the county of Grey. After his defeat he had tendered his resignation, but his colleagues had refused to accept it, and had pressed him to remain in the Government. A motion was introduced by Mr. Notman during the session to the effect that Mr. Morrison's retention of office under the circumstances above detailed was subversive of the first principles of Responsible Government, and a most dangerous violation of the spirit of the constitution. This motion was defeated in its turn, the vote standing 61 to 50. Mr. Morrison's conduct was thus sustained by the House, but the discussion on the subject tended to the further weakening of the Ministry, who found themselves much less confident at the close of the session than at the beginning.

The sessional legislation was unimportant from an historical point of view. The prorogation took place on the 18th of May. On the 10th of June a proclamation by the Governor-General put an end to the Sixth Parliament. On the 12th, Mr. Rose resigned the post

*"It must be admitted that on this particular question M. Cartier shows to great disadvantage. The lawyer and the sectionalist are seen everywhere; the statesman and the Canadian nowhere."—*Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. I., p. 83.

of Solicitor-General East, together with his seat in the Cabinet. He was succeeded by Mr. Cauchon, who had rendered a qualified support to the Administration ever since the Double Shuffle, and whose support had grown stronger with time. Mr. Rose's resignation was not attributable to any difference with his colleagues. It was due partly to his want of the practical knowledge necessary for adequately discharging the duties of his Department, and partly to his impaired health, begotten of the labours incidental to his public duties and a large professional business. He retained his seat in Parliament, and continued to support the Ministry so long as they remained in power.

The general elections came off during the summer, and though the campaign was conducted with vigour, it was attended by much less disorder than had marked previous contests. The ministerial programme simply embodied a continuation of the existing policy. The chief planks in the Opposition platform were retrenchment and Representation by Population, in addition to a general condemnation of the Government. The most was made of the unauthorized advances to the Grand Trunk Railway already referred to, and the presence in the Cabinet of the Hon. John Ross, who was President of the Company, was denounced without stint; as was also that of Mr. Morrison, who had held office so long without a seat in Parliament. The result of the contest as a whole was that the ministerial ascendency was maintained. Each side gained some unexpected advantages, and each also sustained some serious losses. Many prominent members failed to secure reëlection. In Upper Canada the Opposition sustained a serious loss by the defeat of Mr. Brown in East Toronto, where he was successfully opposed by Mr. John Crawford, a supporter of the Government. Messieurs A. A. Dorion, Lemieux and Thibaudeau, Mr. Brown's somewhile colleagues, also sustained defeat in their respective constituencies in Lower Canada. The most significant ministerial defeats were those of the Postmaster-General

(Sidney Smith) and Ogle R. Gowan in Upper Canada, and of Solicitor-General Morin and Messieurs Dunkin and Campbell in Lower Canada. Mr. Brown, who was in ill-health, did not seek another constituency at that time, and did not reënter public life until 1863. Mr. A. A. Dorion remained out of Parliament for a year, when he was returned for Hochelaga. Mr. Lemieux was elected to the Upper House for the De la Durantaye Division at the biennial election of 1862. Mr. Thibaudeau's defeat was final, and we shall not meet him again. The Postmaster-General's defeat was remedied by his election to the Legislative Council for the Trent Division, and he was thus enabled to retain his portfolio without any violation of the Parliamentary proprieties. Solicitor-General Morin, after being defeated in Terrebonne, was returned for Laval, the sitting member for that constituency having been appointed to a public office. Mr. Dunkin also obtained a constituency in the following spring, when he was returned for Brome. Major Campbell did not reënter the Parliamentary arena.

The most conspicuous new members were Alexander Mackenzie, Henri Gustave Joly, Henri Elzéar Taschereau and Joseph Goderic Blanchet. Mr. Mackenzie, who was returned for Lambton, then began that busy and useful Parliamentary career with the course of which every Canadian of the present day is familiar. He is a native of Perthshire, Scotland, where he in his youth learned and practised the trade of a stonemason. In 1842, being then twenty years of age, he emigrated to Canada and settled at Kingston, whence, in 1847, he removed to the neighbourhood of Sarnia. He carried on his trade, and also successfully engaged in business as a builder and contractor. He attained a high reputation throughout the neighbourhood in which he resided as a self-made man of exceptional industry and ability, and of unquestionable honesty of purpose. Being a very pronounced Reformer, and a strong supporter of Mr. Brown, he for some time edited and conducted a newspaper published at Sarnia in



THE HON. ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.

the interests of his party. In 1860 his brother, Mr. Hope F. Mackenzie, was returned to the Assembly for Lambton, but declined reëlection in 1861, as business matters demanded his attention. Alexander accordingly succeeded him in the representation. He was from the first a ready and effective debater, and possessed a wonderful faculty for dealing with minute and complicated details. It may safely be said of him that his character, no less than his abilities, won the respect of the country during his first Parliamentary session, and that, though he has been a strong partisan, and has made no secret of his opinions, he has retained that respect down to the present day.

Mr. Joly is of French Canadian parentage, but was born in France, and received his early education there. He removed to Canada in his youth, and in course of time studied law and was called to the bar. Having resolved to enter public life, he in 1861 successfully contested the representation of Lotbinière, which he thenceforward represented for many years. He is a pronounced Liberal, and from the outset of his public career has devoted himself, both in and out of Parliament, to the advancement of Liberal principles. Mr. Taschereau, who now occupies an honoured position on the bench, is a member of an old and well-known French Canadian family. He was then a successful member of the Lower Canadian bar, to which he had been called in 1857. Having been returned to the Assembly for his native county, he ranged himself on the side of the Ministry. Dr. Blanchet was at that time a popular and successful physician resident at the town of Lévis, for which constituency he was returned to the Assembly in the ministerial interest. He has ever since sat in the Legislature—sometimes in that of Canada, sometimes in that of his native Province, sometimes in both; and at the present day he sits in the Commons for the constituency by which he was first returned to Parliament.

The death of William Lyon Mackenzie, which occurred during

the summer, is an event not unworthy of being recorded here. The close of his life, like the beginning of it, was passed amid poverty and gloom. He resigned his seat for Haldimand at the end of the session of 1858, and did not again take any part in public affairs, except by discussing them in his *Weekly Message*, which he continued to publish at irregular intervals down to the spring of 1860. In that quaint periodical he animadverted upon men and things in the voluble, impassioned style which was so peculiarly his own; but the enterprise was not a pecuniary success, and yielded an income altogether insufficient for the necessities of his family. A short time prior to the resignation of his seat in Parliament the Upper Canadian Reformers set on foot a subscription, with the ostensible object of presenting him with a testimonial, but really for the purpose of aiding him in his hard struggle with poverty. A considerable sum was realized, part of which was invested in a house on Bond Street, Toronto, where he resided at the time of his death. The rest was loaned to him by the subscription committee. While this fund lasted it doubtless did something to smooth his pathway, and to avert the despair which was slowly but surely fastening its grasp upon him. For some time before his death there was an evident failure of his physical and mental powers. With shattered health and blighted hopes, with a family dependent upon him for support, and without any means of suitably providing for them, he lost heart, and longed for the rest of the grave. During his last illness he refused medical treatment, declining to make any effort to longer preserve a life which had lost all charms for him. He breathed his last on the 28th of August, at the age of sixty-six years. His career is one which can by no means be held up to unqualified admiration, but he was, according to his lights, a sincere patriot, and one who wished well to his fellow-creatures. His energy, though frequently misdirected, was such as, under different conditions, must have ensured success. His ambition, though unstable and erratic,

was upon the whole honourable and public-spirited. His great defect was his inability to reason, and his tendency to be driven hither and thither by his impulses. The problem of human existence was to him, even more than to most men, a curiously involved and insoluble affair, and he spent most of his days and many of his nights in vain attempts to solve it from the wrong end. His life, no less than his death, was sad and sorrowful, but Canada may well afford to drop a tear over the grave of the man who, rash and wrong-headed as he was, never ceased to be zealous for Canadian liberty and popular rights.

On the 24th of October Sir Edmund Head's administration of Canadian affairs came to an end, and he sailed for England immediately afterwards.* He had not during his stay among us developed any extraordinary qualities of statesmanship, nor did he, like his predecessor, leave a host of warmly-attached friends behind him; but, except among the more virulent members of the Opposition, there was a general feeling that he had tried to do his duty, and that in all essential points he had succeeded. He was not a man of much personal magnetism, and did not seem to court devoted friendships; but he was careful, painstaking and conscientious, and rarely affixed his signature to a public document until he had read and comprehended the contents. He was fond of superintending minute details, and would have made an excellent head of a department. Notwithstanding his learning and his knowledge of politics, it may be said that he found his intellectual level as Poor Law Commissioner, in which capacity he proved himself to be a useful and clear-headed man. Some idea of the texture of his mind may be formed from the fact that he wrote an entire book (a

* "I leave my character behind me," says Sir Peter Teazle. Had Sir Edmund echoed the sentiment he would have been fully borne out by the sinister blessing which *The Globe* sent after him on the 26th of October. Witness the following extract: "Sir Edmund Head departs, leaving a worse character behind him than any of his predecessors, not excepting even his worthy cousin, the other baronet."

small one it is true; but still, one that must have required considerable labour) on the proper use of the two little words *shall* and *will*.* Soon after his return to England he was an unsuccessful candidate for the representation of the borough of Pontefract in the House of Commons. He derived some solace for his disappointment by being gazetted to a Civil Service Commissionership. He was also elected Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, a position which he retained until his death on the 28th of January, 1868, when, as he left no male issue, the baronetcy became extinct.†

His successor as Governor-General of Canada was Charles Stanley, Fourth Viscount Monck, a native of Templemore, in the county of Tipperary, Ireland, where he was born in 1819. He was descended from the old Norman family of Le Moyne, and was the son of an Irish viscount, to whom he succeeded in 1849. He had been called to the Irish bar, and had sat for some years in the House of Commons for the English constituency of Portsmouth. Upon the formation of Lord Palmerston's Ministry in February, 1855, he was appointed a Lord of the Treasury, and he retained that position until the general elections of 1857, when he failed to secure a seat in Parliament. He had manifested some aptitude for official life, but did not again hold any public position until his appointment as Governor-General of Canada in 1861. He arrived at Quebec in the steamship *North Briton* on the 23rd of October, and assumed charge of the Administration two days afterwards.

Scarcely had Lord Monck succeeded to the direction of affairs ere an event occurred which for a time threatened to involve serious consequences, and which proved that the Duke of Newcastle's sanguine anticipations with reference to the Prince of Wales's visit to the United States had not been well grounded. The forcible

* "Shall and Will; or, Two Chapters on Future Auxiliary Verbs." London, 1856.

† His only son, John, lost his life in Canada on the 25th of September, 1859, when he was drowned while bathing in the St. Maurice River, near the Falls of Shawanegan.

taking of the Confederate envoys, Messieurs Mason and Slidell, from the British mail steamer *Trent*, in mid-ocean, by Captain Wilkes, of the United States sloop of war *San Jacinto*, occurred on the 8th of November. No need to tell in detail a story which every Canadian knows by heart. The conduct of the American Government and the language of the American press were unsuited to the gravity of the occasion, and war seemed inevitable. Our Canadian volunteers sprang to arms. Steps were taken to organize the militia. New companies were formed, and every Canadian youth old enough to bear arms exhibited an enthusiasm for drill. From that time to the end of the American conflict the cause of the North found few adherents in our midst. The all-but-universal hope was that Jefferson Davis and his coadjutors would be successful in establishing a Southern Confederacy upon a firm and solid basis. Southern refugees found a warm welcome among us, and in some instances were fêted as though they had been the representatives of a noble and righteous cause. Many of our public men renewed the agitation as to the necessity for an intercolonial railway from Quebec to Halifax, whereby we might have a route to the seaboard through British territory. Our military enthusiasm was intensified by the presence among us of regular troops which arrived from England in considerable numbers. Had an appeal to the God of battles been necessary, Canada would doubtless have approved her loyalty in the field. Happily no such attestation was required at her hands. The American Government—albeit with a very bad grace—receded from the untenable attitude which they had assumed, and on the first day of the new year the captured envoys were surrendered to Great Britain. And so the threatened danger passed by.

The death of the Prince Consort on the 14th of December evoked much sympathy in Canada for Her Majesty's bereavement, and warmly-expressed addresses of condolence were forwarded to her across the sea. There were no local events of importance during the

early months of 1862. Parliament had been summoned for the 20th of March. Just before that date Messieurs Vankoughnet and Morrison accepted seats on the bench, and thereby vacated their places in the Cabinet, the membership whereof was accordingly incomplete at the opening of the session. Mr. Vankoughnet became Chancellor of Upper Canada, and Mr. Morrison became a puisné judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the same section of the Province.

The opening was attended by unusual pomp and display, it being the beginning, not only of the first session of a new Parliament, but of the first session held under Lord Monck's *régime*. In the Assembly, Joseph Edouard Turcotte, member for Three Rivers, the ministerial candidate for the Speakership, was elected to that office by a majority of thirteen over Mr. Sicotte, the Opposition candidate. The Speaker-elect had sat in the Assembly for many years, and his experience, as well as his talents, fitted him for the honourable office imposed on him. The Legislative Council for the first time exercised the privilege conferred upon them by the Act of 1860,* and elected Sir Allan MacNab to the office of Speaker of their House, thereby superseding Sir N. F. Belleau. The latter, however, retained his seat in the Government, and accepted the office of Minister of Agriculture, which thenceforward became a separate department, and was no longer held *ex officio* by the President of the Executive Council.†

The Speech from the Throne bore testimony to Her Majesty's recognition of the loyalty of the Canadian people, as exhibited during the *Trent* imbroglio. A free exchange of commodities between Canada and the Maritime Provinces was recommended, as was also a reorganization of the Canadian militia. The discussion of the Address in Reply was delayed in consequence of the recent ministerial resignations, and of further modifications which took place after the opening. On the 26th, when the session was less than a week old, Mr. Ross resigned the Presidency of the Council,

* *Ante*, p. 347. † *Ante*, p. 266.

and retired from the Government. Mr. Sherwood resigned the Receiver-Generalship and became Commissioner of Crown Lands. The vacancies were filled on the 27th by the appointment of John Beverley Robinson as President of the Council, John Carling as Receiver-General, and the Hon. James Patton as Solicitor-General West. As these gentlemen favoured representation by population, it was at first supposed that their admission to office would produce some modification of the ministerial policy, but as matter of fact the only modification which supervened was that "Rep. by Pop.," as it was called, was left an open question in the Cabinet, whereas it had previously been closed to consideration there, in consequence of the opposition to it of the Lower Canadian members. Messieurs Robinson and Carling were reëlected in their respective constituencies of Toronto West and London, but Mr. Patton, who sat in the Legislative Council for the Saugeen Division, upon returning to his constituents for reëlection—as he was bound to do under the Act of 1856*—was defeated by John McMurrich, of Toronto, an anti-ministerialist. Mr. Patton, however, retained his portfolio.

The Address was adopted in the Upper House without division. The debate upon it in the Assembly was of wearisome length, and was not terminated until the 5th of April, when Ministers were sustained on a motion which was practically one of want of confidence, by a vote of 65 to 48—involving a majority of 17. The interval was almost entirely occupied in discussing amendments on the subject of representation by population, the most vigorous advocate of that measure being Mr. William McDougall. With the exception of an Act organizing the Bureau of Agriculture as a separate public department, under the direction and management of the Minister of Agriculture, the legislation of the session was unimportant. The influence of the Government perceptibly declined as the weeks went by. They suffered considerable loss of

* *Ante*, p. 347.

prestige in consequence of a debate on the subject of the new Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, for the erection whereof $900,000 had been appropriated. It now appeared that the entire appropriation had been consumed, in addition to considerable sums which had been expended without the authority of the Legislature; and yet the structures were not half completed. Mr. Rose, who had had charge of the Public Works Department when the contracts had been let, now came in for some strong criticism, and it was alleged that his want of practical knowledge had cost the country immense sums. Other abuses came to light in some of the departments, and it was evident that the Ministry had been in power so long as to have become somewhat careless of the public interests. The prevalent feeling of the Assembly was such that before the session had lasted two months the Government held office by a very frail tenure, and a suitable opportunity was all that was needed to ensure their defeat. The opportunity was afforded by a Bill for the reorganization of the militia, introduced by Attorney-General Macdonald. It was a strong measure, and, if carried, would unquestionably have rendered the Province strong to resist attack; but it would have required an expenditure out of all proportion to the revenue, and its introduction caused no little alarm, more especially among the Lower Canadian members. When it came up for its second reading on the 20th of May it was rejected by a vote of 61 to 54. On this question Mr. Macdonald had a clear Upper Canadian majority of seven; and the defeat of the Bill was owing to the defection of a number of Mr. Cartier's supporters. On the following day the Government resigned.

Somewhat to the public surprise, the Governor had recourse, in this emergency, to Mr. J. S. Macdonald. That gentleman's course had been so independent of the considerations by which most partymen were swayed in those days that his personal following in the Assembly was not large, and his ability to form a Ministry was not

commonly believed in. As public opinion then stood, however, no member of the Opposition could boast of an overmastering Parliamentary influence, and it would not have been easy to say who, if not Mr. Macdonald, could command the strongest vote. Mr Macdonald proved that he was at all events strong enough to form a Government. With the assistance of Mr. Sicotte he soon accomplished his task, and the Macdonald-Sicotte Government was sworn in on the 24th. Its composition was as follows:—

UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. J. S. Macdonald, Premier, and Attorney-General West.
" " M. H. Foley, Postmaster-General.
" " W. P. Howland, Minister of Finance.
" " W. McDougall, Commissioner of Crown Lands.
" " James Morris, Receiver-General.
" " Adam Wilson, Solicitor-General West.

LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. L. V. Sicotte, Attorney-General East.
" " A. A. Dorion, Provincial Secretary.
" " T. D. McGee, President of the Council.
" " U. J. Tessier, Commissioner of Public Works.
" " François Evanturel, Minister of Agriculture.
" " J. J. C. Abbott, Solicitor-General East.

The only members of the Government with whom the reader is unacquainted were Adam Wilson, François Evanturel, and John Joseph Caldwell Abbott. Mr. Wilson was a distinguished Toronto lawyer, whose political opinions had been formed in the school of Robert Baldwin, and who sat in the Assembly for North York. Mr. Evanturel, a Lower Canadian advocate and a large landed proprietor, sat for Quebec County. Mr. Abbott was a prominent

and rising member of the Montreal bar, and he sat in the Assembly for his native county of Argenteuil. Both the Solicitors-General had seats in the Cabinet. All the Ministers received the endorsement of their respective constituents, except Mr. Morris, who, having been appointed a member of the Legislative Council under the old system, did not need to appeal to electoral suffrage.

On the 26th, Mr. Wallbridge—upon whom, nearly four years prior to this date, had devolved the task of announcing the resignation of the Brown-Dorion Administration—unfolded the ministerial programme to the Assembly. It embodied a recognition of the double majority principle with respect to purely local questions, and announced a determination to submit a measure for the more equitable adjustment of Parliamentary representation in each section of the Province. An amendment of the militia law, a readjustment of the tariff, a new insolvent law, a thorough system of retrenchment in the public service, a searching investigation into all matters connected with the new Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, and the maintenance of Her Majesty's decision with reference to the Seat of Government, were also promised. This exposition of the Government's policy was repeated in French by Mr. Loranger; and in the Upper House a similar explanation was made by the new Receiver-General, Mr. Morris. In the course of the ensuing discussions it was made manifest that the great question of Representation by Population was practically ignored. The proposed "more equitable adjustment of the Parliamentary representation" was found to involve merely a rearrangement of the constituencies, without interfering with the equal membership for the two sections of the Province. There was moreover an express understanding that the equality of representation should not be disturbed during the existing Parliament. This determination was the more surprising inasmuch as four members of the new Government—Messieurs McDougall, Foley, Howland and Wilson—had long been among the foremost

advocates of "Rep. by Pop.," and had spoken strongly in its favour up to the very eve of entering the Ministry. The *Globe* opened its batteries upon them for their inconsistency, and taxed them with a venal desertion of their principles. A good many Upper Canadian Reformers took a similar stand, but the Assembly and the country at large were in favour of giving the new Ministers a fair trial. The leaders of the late Government declared that they would offer no factious opposition, either at the polls or elsewhere, but would even assist their successors in completing the legislation of the session. They acted up to their declarations, and the Macdonald-Sicotte Administration thus found themselves strong enough to proceed to the development of some features of the policy which had been announced on their behalf. They completed the unfinished business of the session, which was brought to a close on the 9th of June. Among the measures passed after their accession to power were a short Militia Bill, making provision for the maintenance of a volunteer force, but being much less comprehensive in its provisions than the defeated measure which had led to the fall of the late Government.

Some of the foremost English journals expressed themselves strongly upon the subject of the defeat of the Macdonald-Cartier Government's Militia Bill. The prevalent feeling in the mother country seemed to be that Canada was disposed to shirk her responsibilities, and to leave England to provide for her defence against foreign aggression. At such a distance from the scene of action, and with very inadequate knowledge of public opinion here, Englishmen have always been conspicuous for shooting wide of the mark where Canadian affairs are concerned. At this juncture they would seem to have been farther astray than usual. Mr. Macdonald's measure had been defeated, partly because its enactment would have involved an expenditure greater than the necessities of the case demanded: greater certainly than the pecuniary condition of the

Province would have justified: and partly because it had been introduced under the auspices of an Administration whereof the Canadian people had begun to grow weary. There was no want of loyalty among us; no desire to avoid our responsibilities, pecuniary or other. But the tone adopted by the English press—which of course echoed the opinions of many leading statesmen and scholars in the kingdom—during the summer of 1862, struck a blow at Canadian loyalty from which it has never fully recovered. One journal declared that we were a colony of greedy self-seekers, and that neither credit nor advantage to the mother country was to be derived from any longer continuing the connection with us. Another more coarsely remarked that our loyalty was in our breeches pockets. At least a score of widely-read journals took occasion to gird at us. The Premier himself—Lord Palmerston—asserted from his place in the House of Commons, with a considerable appearance of ill-temper, that Her Majesty's Government had done as much for the defence of Canada as they intended to do, and that it rested with Canadians themselves either to do the remainder or to disgrace the stock whence they had sprung. The Governor-General, Lord Monck, in more diplomatic language, expressed similar opinions at a public dinner in Montreal. Canadians generally felt that they had received a succession of unmerited slaps in the face. Assuredly there is loyalty in Canada at the present day, but it is a sentiment of radically different stripe from that which animated us during the discussions arising out of the *Trent* affair; and any one who has carefully watched the progress of public opinion among us during the last twenty years will admit that a change first began to be apparent during the summer of 1862.

The Government set on foot a rigid system of economy in the public service during the summer and autumn. The staff of clerks in the various departments was reduced, and the strictest supervision was exercised over every branch of expenditure. As a

necessary result a considerable saving was effected, and the state of the public finances was to that extent improved. Among the twelve Legislative Councillors returned at the biennial election of this year was Mr. Holton, who, with the exception of his brief tenure of office in the Brown-Dorion Administration, had taken no part in public affairs since the general election of 1857, when he had been defeated in Montreal by Solicitor-General Rose. He was now returned by acclamation for the Victoria Division, which embraced a great portion of the city of Montreal.

The neighbouring republic continued to be the theatre of war, and during the latter months of 1862 Canada began to be sensible of being materially affected thereby. Columbia's necessity was Canada's opportunity. The rebellion had of course seriously interfered with the raising of food and farm-stock in the States, and the demand for those commodities had become much greater than the domestic supply. Dealers naturally turned to Canada as the cheapest and most accessible foreign market, and the Province was overrun by Americans who bought up cattle, poultry, eggs, and other staple articles of food, in enormous quantities. Horses were also in great requisition for cavalry purposes. Prices rose with the increased demand, and money flowed into the country in a steady stream. Our farmers, who had never before enjoyed such a golden opportunity, not even during the Crimean War, took full advantage of the situation, and throve apace upon the necessities of their neighbours. The experience of seven or eight years before had not been thrown away upon them, and as a rule they did not repeat the senseless extravagance of that period. The Americans did not relish the high rates of duty imposed by the Provincial Parliament, and had already begun to raise an outcry against the contemplated renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. Such was the condition of affairs at the close of 1862.

The intercolonial line of railway from Quebec to Halifax con-

tinued meanwhile to form the subject of discussion between Canada, the Maritime Provinces and the mother country. Mr. Dorion did not regard the enterprise with favour, as he considered it to be in advance of our necessities and resources. As his colleagues did not concur in this view, but kept up negotiations with a view to the construction of the road, he formally withdrew from the Government on the 27th of January, and was succeeded in the Provincial Secretaryship* by the Hon. Jacques Olivier Bureau, a member of the *Rouge* party, who sat in the Legislative Council as member for the De Lorimier Division.

Parliament met on the 12th of February. During the preceding summer Sir Allan MacNab had succumbed to an attack of gout of exceptional severity, and had found relief in the grave from the many cares whereby he had long been beset. The extraordinary circumstances connected with his last illness, death and burial are still fresh in the memory of many readers of these pages. His death had left vacant the post of Speaker of the Legislative Council, and the first duty of the members of that body, after the assembling of Parliament, was to elect his successor. They fulfilled that duty by electing the Hon. (now Sir) Alexander Campbell, a popular lawyer of Kingston, who had been returned to the Upper House for the Cataraqui Division at the biennial election of 1858. He was a Liberal-Conservative, and had long been a partner in business of the Hon. John A. Macdonald. His election to the Speakership was unanimous. On the following day the Governor delivered the Speech from the Throne. It recommended the enactment of several measures of public utility, but contained nothing of historic interest. An amendment to the Address in Reply, in favour of representation by population, and expressing regret that the Government had not resolved to do justice to Upper Canada, was moved in the Assembly

* The portfolio was first offered to Mr. Loranger, who declined it, and accepted a seat on the bench.

THE HON. SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

by Mr. Matthew Crooks Cameron, member for North Ontario. This, as well as other motions embodying the same principle, was defeated by the solid Lower Canadian vote, but the discussions and division lists rendered it evident that the Government held office by a feeble tenure, and were in fact too weak to carry on the public business with any assurance of success. A measure introduced by Mr. R. W. Scott, member for Ottawa City, amending the Upper Canadian Separate School law, rendered the ministerial position still more precarious. They had adopted the separate school system as a part of their programme, but they were now abandoned by the entire body of Clear Grits on the question, as well as by other members upon whom they had counted for support. At the head of the Clear Grits Mr. George Brown once more presented himself in the Assembly, having been returned for South Oxford, where a vacancy had occurred while the House was in session. His views on Rep. by Pop. and separate schools had undergone no change, and he now waged war against the Ministry on both those questions. A large Upper Canadian majority voted against the separate school measure, which, however, was carried by means of the Lower Canadians. Under these circumstances the Ministry, who had professed to adopt the double majority principle in local matters, should have resigned; but this they were not disposed to do. They threw their professions to the winds, and held on to office. For this abandonment of their alleged principles they suffered still further desertions. Early in May Mr. J. A. Macdonald moved and carried, by a majority of five, a direct vote of want of confidence. Ministers advised a prorogation with a view to dissolution, which was assented to by the Governor. The regular business was completed, and the session came to an end on the 12th. A dissolution followed, and election writs were issued, returnable on the 3rd of July.

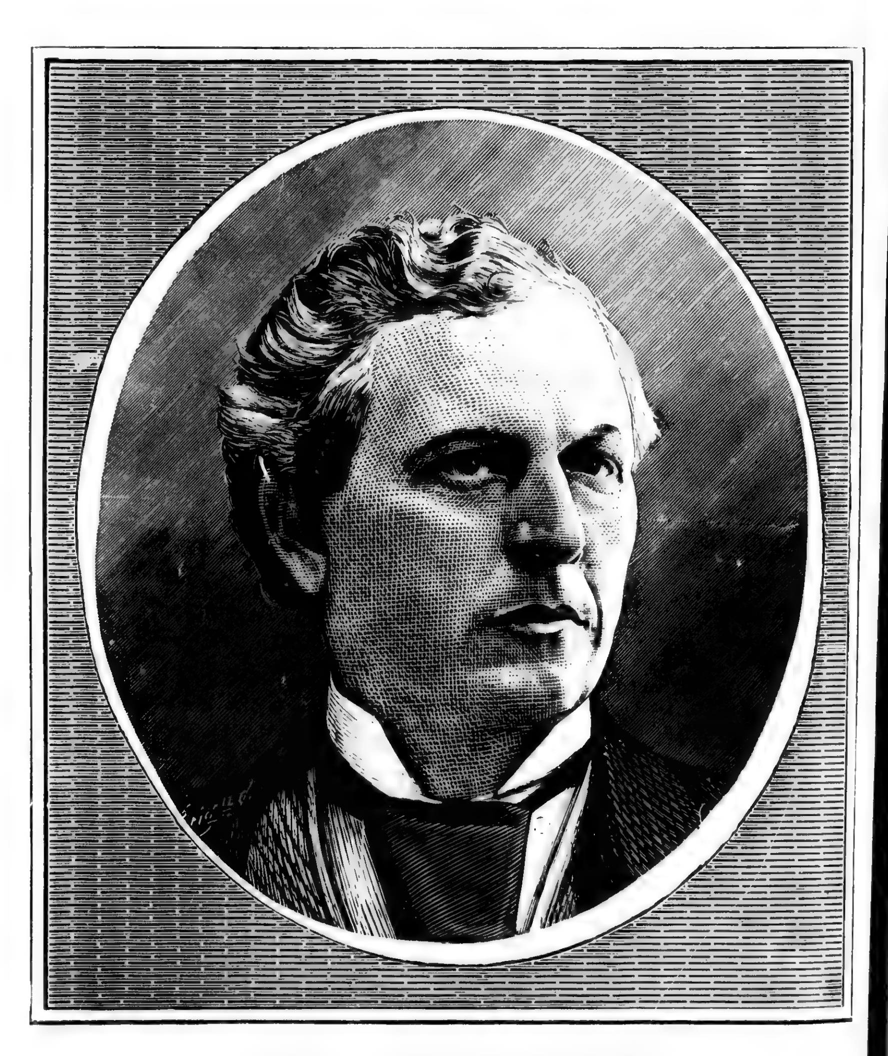
Two ministerial changes had occurred during the session. On the 6th of March Mr. Morris, on account of ill-health, resigned the

Receiver-Generalship, and was succeeded by Mr. Fergusson-Blair. On the 10th of May Mr. Adam Wilson ceased to be Solicitor-General, and accepted a seat on the bench. Before the appointment of the latter's successor, other important changes had become necessary. There had for some weeks been a want of perfect harmony between the two sections of the Cabinet. The Premier was fully conscious of his weakness, and wished to strengthen his position by admitting Mr. Dorion and Mr. Holton to office. Mr. Dorion, it was well known, would only accept office as the chief of the Lower Canadian section; and to this Mr. Sicotte would not consent. A general break-up of the Government ensued. Mr. Sicotte, with his Lower Canadian colleagues, withdrew in a body.* Mr. Macdonald retained only three of his Upper Canadian Ministers—Messieurs Howland, McDougall and Fergusson-Blair—and supplied the places of Messieurs Foley and Wilson by Messieurs Oliver Mowat and Lewis Wallbridge. Mr. Dorion, having consented to form the Lower Canadian section, applied himself to his task with success, and on the 16th—four days after the prorogation—the Macdonald-Dorion Government came into being. It would answer no purpose to give the membership at that date, as it underwent various modifications before the meeting of Parliament, consequent on the defeat of some of the Ministers at the polls. The policy propounded by the late Government also underwent modification with a view to the conciliation of the Clear Grits. The intercolonial railway scheme was for the time abandoned, as were also several other projects of less importance. The elections came off in the heat of June. In Upper Canada the Ministry gained considerably, but the loss in the Lower section of the Province left the total result practically unchanged. As finally adjusted on the 12th of August the Ministry stood as follows:—

* Messieurs Tessier and Abbott did not formally withdraw until the 27th of the month, but it does not appear that they discharged any official duties after the withdrawal of their colleagues.

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THE HON. LUCIUS SETH HUNTINGTON.

UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. J. S. Macdonald, Premier and Attorney-General West.
" " W. McDougall, Commissioner of Crown Lands.
" " W. P. Howland, Receiver-General.
" " A. J. Fergusson-Blair, Provincial Secretary.
" " Oliver Mowat, Postmaster-General.

LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. A. A. Dorion, Attorney-General East.
" " L. H. Holton, Minister of Finance.
" " Isidore Thibaudeau, President of the Council.
" " L. Letellier de St. Just, Minister of Agriculture.
" " L. S. Huntington, Solicitor-General East.
" " Maurice Laframboise, Commissioner of Public Works.

The Solicitor-Generalship for Upper Canada had from the original formation of the Government in May been held by Lewis Wallbridge, who resigned on the 12th of August—the day of the final readjustment.* The office thenceforward remained vacant for more than four months. Mr. Thibaudeau was a wealthy Quebec merchant, who had just been returned to the Assembly for Quebec Centre. Mr. Huntington, who has since become one of the most prominent public men in Canada, was at that time comparatively new to Parliamentary life. He had, however, even then acquired considerable repute as an advocate and journalist, and had made his mark as an effective speaker. He sat in the Assembly for the county of Shefford. Mr. Laframboise, who represented Bagot, was also an advocate, resident at Montreal. The other members of the Ministry are already known to the

* Mr. Wallbridge's resignation seems not to have actually taken place until some time later, but the official records show that he ceased to hold office, and to draw the salary attached thereto, on the date indicated.

reader. Mr. Drummond, who had accepted the portfolio of Public Works, had failed in his election in two constituencies, and had accordingly resigned office. Messieurs Dorion and Holton had also sustained defeat, but afterwards secured election in other constituencies.

The portfolios having been finally apportioned, the first session of the Eighth Parliament met on the 13th of August. Mr. Tessier was elected Speaker of the Legislative Council, and Mr. Wallbridge of the Assembly. The opening Speech was unimportant; but the Address in Reply evoked the warmest debate in the Assembly that had been heard there for years. It soon appeared that what the Government had gained on the one hand by reconstruction they had lost on the other. The ousted members, Messieurs Sicotte, Foley, and McGee, now reinforced the Opposition ranks, and poured out the vials of their wrath upon the Premier's head in unstinted tide. That gentleman admitted that the policy of the Government had been modified during the recess, and he was accused of having no fixed policy except a lust for power. Grave charges of unstatesmanlike intrigues were brought against him by the ex-ministers, who gave full rein to their anger. In the wordy warfare Mr. Macdonald held his own, for he possessed a sharp tongue—the only edged tool that grows sharper by constant use—and hurled back with scathing energy the accusations brought against him. This, however, was not precisely the way to win votes, and though he contrived to drag through the session, he narrowly escaped defeat on several occasions. The legislation was insignificant, too much time being taken up by personal discussions to admit of important additions to the statute-book. The almost barren session came to an end on the 15th of October.

The Government lost further ground during the recess. On the 26th of December they appointed Mr. Albert Norton Richards, member for South Leeds, to the vacant Solicitor-Generalship for

Upper Canada. Upon returning to his constituents for reëlection Mr. Richards was opposed by Mr. David Ford Jones, a pronounced Conservative, who received all the support which the personal presence of the ablest speakers of the Opposition could give him. Mr. J. A. Macdonald and T. D. McGee took the field, and delivered effective harangues against the Government in different parts of the riding. The Solicitor-General was beaten by a majority of 75 votes, and this in a constituency wherein he had, a few months before, been returned by a majority of 135. He accordingly resigned office.* The Premier was determined not to recognize the inevitable until the last moment, and still professed confidence in his possessing a Parliamentary majority. Under such ominous circumstances the Houses met on the 19th of February, 1864.

The Speech referred, among other matters, to the progress made in the erection of the public buildings at Ottawa, and to the probable early removal thither of the Seat of Government. The programme was not very comprehensive, the Ministry feeling too insecure in their positions to venture upon any innovations. The Opposition did not move any amendment to the Address, but assailed the Ministry on the score of tergiversation and general inefficiency. When the business of the session began in earnest, it soon became apparent that the Government could not command a working majority in the Assembly. There was a preponderance of Upper Canadian votes in their favour. In the Lower Province they were in a decided minority. They commanded a small majority of the whole House, but were too weak to carry on the Government with advantage to the country or themselves. After some fruitless attempts at reconstruction, they voluntarily resigned office on the 21st of March.

The situation was critical. Parties were divided by majorities so narrow that no Government, by whomsoever formed, and of whom-

* His resignation took place on the 30th of January, 1864.

soever composed, could feel safe. The constitution was on its trial, and far-seeing statesmen predicted that it would not emerge from the ordeal without serious damage. The future looked ominous, and a general feeling of insecurity began to permeate the minds of our public men.

The Governor himself could not conceal his anxiety. As a possible means of getting over the crisis, he entrusted the ex-Provincial Secretary, Mr. Fergusson-Blair, with the formation of a Ministry. That gentleman made the attempt, and failed. Mr. Cartier was applied to, with a precisely similar result. His Excellency then had recourse to Sir Etienne—formerly known to us as Colonel—Taché. Since his retirement from the Government in November, 1857, the Colonel had had the dignity of knighthood conferred upon him by Her Majesty. Of late he had not taken any very conspicuous part in public affairs, though he had regularly attended the sittings of the Legislative Council, of which—having been appointed under the old system—he was a life member. No man in the country was more highly respected. He had been approached by the late Premier, Mr. J. S. Macdonald, with a view to taking charge of the Lower Canadian section of the Cabinet. Similar approaches had more recently been made by Mr. Fergusson-Blair. To all overtures Sir Etienne had hitherto responded courteously, but unfavourably. He had reached an age when ambition had no longer much sway over him. He loved quiet, and had no longing to undertake the burden of constructing and carrying on a Government, more especially in the face of manifold difficulties. The matter being pressed upon him in the light of a public duty, however, and it being represented to him that he, more than any man in the country, was in a position to bring confidence to the Administration, he consented to make the attempt. He put himself in communication with Mr. John A. Macdonald, who undertook the formation of the Upper Canada section of the Administration. The arrangements occupied some days, and were attended

with no little difficulty, but they were finally successful, and on the 30th of the month the new Ministers took possession of their portfolios. Thus, for the second time since the Union, a Taché-Macdonald Government came into existence. The membership was as follows:—

LOWER CANADA.

The Hon. Sir E. P. Taché, Premier and Receiver-General.
" " G. E. Cartier, Attorney-General East.
" " A. T. Galt, Minister of Finance.
" " J. C. Chapais, Commissioner of Public Works.
" " T. D. McGee, Minister of Agriculture.
" " H. L. Langevin, Solicitor-General East.

UPPER CANADA.

The Hon. J. A. Macdonald, Attorney-General West.
" " Alexander Campbell, Commissioner of Crown Lands.
" " M. H. Foley, Postmaster-General.
" " Isaac Buchanan, President of the Council.
" " John Simpson, Provincial Secretary.
" " James Cockburn, Solicitor-General West.

The reader has formed the acquaintance of all these gentlemen except the two last-named. Mr. Simpson was a prominent citizen of Niagara, which constituency he represented in the Assembly. Mr. Cockburn, who represented West Northumberland, was a barrister, and resided at Cobourg.

Mr. Foley had always up to this time acted with the Reformers of Upper Canada, so that the new Administration partook, to that extent, of the nature of a Coalition. In other respects it was essentially Liberal-Conservative in its character. Its policy was declared in the Assembly by Mr. Cauchon in French, and by John Hillyard Cameron in English. It embraced a strict attention to the

Provincial defences, and an effort to place the militia in an effective condition; an endeavour to maintain and extend the Reciprocity Treaty, and to establish more intimate commercial relations with the Maritime Provinces. Departmental reform and retrenchment in the public service were also promised, and it was announced that the question of the representation of the people in Parliament would remain an open question. After some discussion of this programme, Parliament adjourned, on the 31st, in order to enable Ministers to complete their arrangements, and to secure re-election in their respective constituencies. The adjournment was until the 3rd of May.





CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BIRTH OF THE DOMINION.

"Thus passed away in calm a Constitution which, born in strife and turmoil, sprung from maladministration and rebellion, forced upon a reluctant Province without consulting its people, and against the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants, had nevertheless, during twenty-five years of unexampled prosperity and material progress, laid the foundation deep and strong of true constitutional liberty."—CONFEDERATION, *by the Hon. John Hamilton Gray, D.C.L., M.P.*, p. 372.

HEN the Houses reassembled on the 3rd of May, after a recess of nearly five weeks, the Ministry had to encounter a spirit which boded ill to their permanent existence. Mr. Foley had been defeated by a considerable majority in North Waterloo by Mr. Isaac Bowman, a local Reformer. The other Ministers had all been reëlected, but they had in several instances been opposed with a stern determination that had done much to diminish their confidence in the future. Immediately after the reassembling, it was made clear that no forbearance would be shown them: that they would have to fight their way inch by inch, and that sharp advantage would be taken of any false step on their part. Attorney-General Macdonald's supplementary explanations of the official programme evoked scathing ridicule and condemnation from the Opposition. A few days afterwards, a motion which was practically one of want of confidence was defeated by a majority of only two. There seemed to be little prospect of any useful legislation, or of public affairs being carried on with vigour or efficiency. The primary object of Ministers was to maintain themselves in power;

the primary object of the Opposition was to turn them out. The majority of the Government was so insignificant as scarcely to deserve the name of a majority at all. They were no stronger than their predecessors, who had voluntarily resigned office because of their inability to carry on the public business with efficiency.

Such a condition of affairs could have but one ending, and that ending came on the 14th of June. Any pretext was sufficient to seal the doom of the Ministry. It had come to light that in the year 1859 a sum of $100,000 had been advanced from the public chest by Mr. Galt, then Minister of Finance in the Cartier-Macdonald Government, to redeem bonds given by the city of Montreal to the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railway Company. By an arrangement entered into after their issue, these bonds had been made redeemable by the Grand Trunk, to which company the Provincial advance had really been made; and this had been done without the sanction or knowledge of Parliament. As an amendment to a motion to go into Committee of Supply, Mr. A. A. Dorion now moved a resolution censuring this transaction. Though directed chiefly against Mr. Galt, the resolution reflected on the Cartier-Macdonald Government as a whole, and it was alleged that the existing Ministry was in all essential respects a resuscitation of the Cartier-Macdonald Government. From a constitutional point of view this latter position was not tenable, but the Taché-Macdonald Administration announced their resolve to stand by Mr. Galt in the transaction, and to share in any censure which might be cast upon him. The motion did not seek to fix any stigma upon Mr. Galt beyond a culpable negligence in keeping the Provincial accounts; but he was by no means disposed to admit even such a modified degree of culpability, and defended himself in a speech of much plausibility and power. Had the Government possessed in any large measure the confidence of Parliament on questions of general policy they might have laughed at Mr. Dorion's motion, but, being already moribund, they suc-

cumbed to the attack. Messieurs Dunkin and Rankin—both of whom had theretofore given them their support—voted for the motion, thereby placing the ministerial majority of two on the side of the Opposition. The vote stood 60 to 58.

The Ministry deliberated. Should they attempt a reconstruction, or demand a dissolution? Neither project seemed to promise any very satisfactory results. Even should they resign, and give the Opposition an opportunity of forming a Government, parties were so nearly balanced that neither could hope to live, except upon the sufferance of the other. Public affairs were literally at a dead-lock. Both parties had tried in vain to carry on the Government of the country. Successive dissolutions and elections had served no purpose except to intensify the spirit of faction, and to array the contending parties more bitterly against each other. Four different ministries had been condemned within little more than two years. The state of affairs seemed hopeless, for the constitution itself was manifestly unequal to the task imposed upon it. It was however necessary that something should be done, and at once, as the sessional business was unfinished, and the Opposition were impatient. Of the various courses open to the Government, the one which seemed to offer the least unsatisfactory results was a new election. It was certain that no Ministry could be formed that would command strong support in the existing Assembly, whereas it was just possible that a newly-elected House might be found less impracticable. Ministers accordingly advised a dissolution, with a view to a fresh appeal to the people. His Excellency, after deliberation, acted on the advice, and gave them authority to dissolve.

But a more satisfactory way out of the difficulty presented itself, and one for which even the most sanguine had not ventured to hope. On the 15th—the day after the ministerial defeat—Mr. Brown had a conversation with Messieurs Alexander Morris and John Henry Pope, members respectively for South Lanark and Compton in the

Assembly. He deprecated the dead-lock, and expressed his opinion that the existing ministerial crisis should be utilized "in settling forever the constitutional difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada."* He also expressed his personal willingness to coöperate "with the existing or any other Administration" that would promptly and firmly deal with the question. Mr. Brown had been Chairman of a Parliamentary Committee which had been appointed some time before, to take into consideration the best means of remedying the grave difficulties which presented themselves in conducting the Government. The Committee had held eight meetings, and had given careful consideration to the all-important subjects which had come before them. They had reported that a strong feeling existed among them, "in favour of changes in the direction of a federative system," applied either to Canada alone or to all the British North American Provinces. Their report had been handed in only a few hours when the ministerial defeat occurred. The two events thus concurring in point of time, seemed to present a pertinent commentary upon each other; and Mr. Brown's conversation with Mr. Morris and Mr. Pope on the following day afforded a practical suggestion of which the two last-named gentlemen availed themselves. They were both trusted supporters of the Administration, and Mr. Morris had long been an advocate of a Federal Union of the Provinces. They obtained Mr. Brown's permission to communicate his views to Mr. J. A. Macdonald and Mr. Galt. The result was that on Friday, the 17th, the two gentlemen last named waited upon Mr. Brown at his rooms in the St. Louis Hotel, when negotiations were opened which resulted in the formation of the most important coalition known to our history. The two Ministers informed Mr. Brown that they had been charged by their colleagues to invite his

* See the statement signed by Messieurs E. P. Taché, George Brown, J. A. Macdonald, G. E. Cartier, and A. T. Galt, read by Attorney-General Macdonald to the Assembly on the 22nd of June.

coöperation in strengthening the Government, with a view to a settlement of the constitutional difficulties between the two sections of the Province. Mr. Brown stated that in his opinion nothing but the extreme urgency of the circumstances, and the hope of permanently settling the sectional question, could justify their meeting together with a view to common political action. On this point his interlocutors fully agreed with him; whereupon Mr. Brown repeated, in effect, what he had stated to Mr. Morris and Mr. Pope, but added that, for personal reasons, he could not consent to enter the Administration. There is no need to go through the details of the negotiations step by step. There were repeated conferences, at which, in addition to the three gentlemen already named, Messieurs Taché and Cartier took part. In a few days the basis of the momentous coalition was agreed upon, and on the 22nd the fact was announced to Parliament. It was settled that the Government should pledge themselves to bring in a measure during the next session to remove existing difficulties by introducing the federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as would permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-West to be incorporated into the same system of government. Representatives were to be sent to the Maritime Provinces and to England, to secure the assent of interests beyond the control of the Canadian Legislature to such a measure as would enable all British North America "to be united under a general legislature, based upon the federal principle." Mr. Brown's objections to entering the Ministry were overcome, and he now consented to enter it with two colleagues from Upper Canada.

It is hardly a figure of speech to say that Parliament and the country were electrified at hearing the announcement that George Brown and John A. Macdonald had agreed to sit side by side in the same Cabinet. As might have been expected, there were wide divergences of opinion. A few persons disapproved of the federal

scheme *in toto.* Others, conspicuous among whom were Mr. A. A. Dorion and Mr. Holton, believed that the time was not ripe for such a project. Mr. Dorion would have consented to the substitution of a federal union of Upper and Lower Canada, in place of the existing legislative union. Indeed, as has been seen,* he had years before expressed his approval of such a change in the constitution; but he regarded the larger scheme of a general confederation of the British North American Provinces as being altogether in advance of the necessities of the time. Mr. Dunkin declared that such a union would lead to more serious embarrassment and confusion than had ever existed in Canada. A number of Upper Canadian Reformers, while approving the principle underlying the scheme, disapproved of Mr. Brown's conduct in entering the Government, and predicted that his doing so would be the means of once more breaking up the party to which he belonged. These latter, moreover, objected to the acceptance by the Opposition of only three seats in the Cabinet. The Opposition, it was urged, had a majority of two in the Assembly, as had been proved by the vote on the 14th. Why then should they consent to accept three seats, leaving nine to the Ministerialists, who were in a minority? There was but one opinion, however, as to the patriotic motives by which all parties had been actuated in entering upon the negotiations, and it was evident enough that Upper Canadians generally were in favour of supporting the coalition. As for Mr. Brown himself, he had abundant reason for self-gratulation. The joint authority scheme which he had time after time advocated in the Assembly, and which had been received by Liberal-Conservatives with ironical derision, had at last commended itself to the intelligence of those very persons who had so contemptuously laughed it down. It is due to Mr. (J. A.) Macdonald to say that from the time when he became a convert to the joint

* *Ante*, p. 404.

authority project he was one of its very ablest advocates.* It was understood that the alliance between the opposing political parties was to be maintained until the project of Confederation should be fully accomplished.

The sessional business was hurried through, and on the 30th of the month Parliament was prorogued. On the same day the ministerial readjustments were carried out. Mr. Brown entered the Government as President of the Council, Mr. Buchanan having resigned that office. Mr. Mowat became Postmaster-General instead of Mr. Foley; and Mr. McDougall became Provincial Secretary in place of Mr. Simpson, who was soon after appointed Assistant Auditor of Public Accounts. Mr. Brown and Mr. Mowat were reëlected in their respective constituencies. Mr. McDougall was defeated in North Ontario by Mr. M. C. Cameron, but three months afterwards found a seat for North Lanark, where the sitting member resigned in his favour.

The history of Confederation has been written at considerable length by a gentleman who took a not undistinguished part in the initiatory proceedings for bringing it about.† A bare outline is all that can be attempted here. As every well-informed Canadian knows, the project had occupied men's minds, at intervals, for many years prior to the Union of 1841. It has been seen that the idea had engaged the attention of the Canadian people and Legislature, as well as of the Government, in comparatively recent times.‡ The discussion of the subject had not been confined to Canada. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island the idea of a union *between themselves* had long been under discussion, and in 1864

* "Here we get a glimpse of the line where his Conservatism ends and his readiness to reform begins. He will not consent to be hurried, but no one can say that on any given question his finality of to-day may not be his starting-point at some future time."—*Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. I., p. 14.

† See *Confederation*, etc., by the Hon. John Hamilton Gray, D.C.L., M.P., Vol. I. Toronto, 1872.

‡ *Ante*, pp. 173, 383, 388, 389.

the Legislatures of those Provinces had passed resolutions authorizing the holding of a Convention for the purpose of effecting that object. The delegates were to meet at Charlottetown, P.E.I., in the following September. The new Coalition Government in Canada determined to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, and to bring before the Convention the merits of the larger scheme of a general union of *all* the Provinces. Eight* of the Ministers accordingly proceeded to Charlottetown at the time appointed. Though they had no official standing at the Convention, which had been summoned to discuss a question in which Canada had no direct concern, they were immediately upon their arrival invited to be present, and to express their views with the utmost freedom. This, of course, had been the precise object of their mission, and they accepted the invitation as cordially as it had been given. Their representations produced such an effect upon the delegates that, after remaining in session some days, it was resolved that the Convention should adjourn to a date to be fixed by the Governor-General, when the members should re-assemble at Quebec, to confer with Canadian representatives on the question of a general union. On this understanding the proceedings at Charlottetown came to an end. The Canadian emissaries then proceeded to Halifax, and thence to St. John, at both of which towns they did much to influence public opinion by means of able speeches delivered at banquets held in their honour. Upon their return to Canada they formally advised his Excellency of what they had accomplished, and recommended the naming of an early day for the meeting at Quebec. His Excellency accordingly fixed upon the 10th of October, and notified the respective Lieutenant-Governors of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

On the date indicated the Quebec Conference was opened. Canada

* J. A. Macdonald, George Brown, G. E. Cartier, A. T. Galt, T. D. McGee, H. L. Langevin, W. McDougall and Alexander Campbell.

was represented by the twelve members of the Administration. Nova Scotia was represented by

The Hon. Charles Tupper, Provincial Secretary.
" " William Alexander Henry, Attorney-General.
" " Jonathan McCully, Leader of Opposition.
" " Robert B. Dickey, M.L.C.
" " Adams George Archibald, M.P.P.

New Brunswick was represented by

The Hon. Samuel Leonard Tilley, Provincial Secretary.
" " John M. Johnson, Attorney-General.
" " William H. Steeves, M.L.C.
" " Edward Barron Chandler, M.L.C.
" " Peter Mitchell, M.L.C.
" " John Hamilton Gray, M.P.P.
" " Charles Fisher, M.P.P.

The representatives of Prince Edward Island were

The Hon. John Hamilton Gray, Premier.
" " Edward Palmer, Attorney-General.
" " William H. Pope, Provincial Secretary.
" " A. A. Macdonald, M.L.C.
" " Edward Whelan, M.L.C.
" " George Coles, M.P.P.
" " T. H. Haviland, M.P.P.

Newfoundland sent only two representatives, viz.,

The Hon. F. B. Carter, Speaker of the House of Assembly.
" " John Ambrose Shea, Leader of Opposition.

Sir Etienne Taché, the Canadian Premier, was chosen President of the Conference, and Major Hewitt Bernard, of the staff of the Attorney-General West, was appointed Secretary. The sittings, like those at Charlottetown in September, were held with closed doors.

The Conference lasted until the 28th of the month. Resolutions embodying the principal points of confederation, but differing in some material respects from those which finally formed the basis of Imperial legislation, were adopted. The deliberations having been brought to a close, the delegates from the Maritime Provinces were hospitably entertained in some of the principal Canadian towns, after which they repaired to their homes. Each body of Provincial delegates stood pledged to use their utmost endeavours to secure the concurrence of their respective Legislatures in the project which had been adopted.

Certain depredations committed by Southern refugees during the autumn caused a good deal of temporary excitement in Canada, and did not tend to improve the far from cordial feeling that existed between us and our neighbours across the lines. During the progress of the Great Rebellion many Southerners found Canada a more congenial place of abode than their own land. They met with much friendliness and sympathy, for—more especially since the *Trent* affair—Canadians generally favoured the Southern cause. As that cause grew more and more desperate, its adherents became reckless, and formed various plots with a view to the discomfiture of the North. Some of these plots doubtless had their origin in an undisciplined and misdirected patriotism. Others would seem to have been dictated by a spirit of downright spoliation and robbery, and our country was made the base of operation of some of the least justifiable. The contiguity of Canada to the States facilitated the machinations of the plotters, and the strong sympathies of the Canadian people seemed to promise immunity from punishment. During the summer of 1864 a scheme was arranged by a number of the refugees for the capture of some of the steamers plying on Lakes Erie and Ontario, and belonging to American merchants. In September two vessels were actually seized and partly plundered. A few weeks later a raid was made on St. Albans, a little town in

Vermont, near the frontier, by twenty-three Southerners under the command of Bennett H. Young, an ex-Confederate soldier. The raiders plundered three of the local banks, shot one of the cashiers, and escaped to Canada with $233,000 booty. This was a proceeding which the Canadian authorities could not ignore. Companies of volunteers were distributed along the frontier to prevent any further breaches of the neutrality laws, and fourteen of the culprits were arrested at the instance of the American authorities, who demanded their extradition under the Ashburton Treaty. Judge Coursol, of Montreal, before whom the enquiry took place, discharged the prisoners from custody on technical grounds. About $90,000, being part of the cash plundered at St. Albans, had been found upon their persons at the time of their arrest. This was now returned to them, but eventually had to be accounted for and paid by the Canadian Government. After their discharge by Judge Coursol, several of them were re-arrested and tried before the Superior Court at Montreal. It was claimed on their behalf that they had throughout acted under instructions from the Confederate Government. The Court decided that they were belligerents, and as such not amenable to extradition under the charge as instituted. They were accordingly once more set at liberty early in the spring of 1865. The American Government declined to press the matter further, but the Canadian authorities had several of them re-arrested and sent to Toronto, to be tried for a breach of the neutrality laws. Public opinion in Montreal was so decidedly in favour of the Southerners that it was believed an impartial trial was not to be had there; and to that belief the action of the Government in changing the venue was doubtless attributable. After examination before the Recorder of Toronto, all the prisoners except Young were discharged from custody for want of sufficient evidence to justify their detention. Young was formally committed for trial, but was admitted to bail. After some months of delay a *nolle prosequi* was entered in the case; and that was the last of the St. Albans Raid prosecutions.

During the month of November, 1864, Mr. Mowat, having accepted a seat on the judicial bench as one of the Vice-Chancellors of Upper Canada, ceased to be a member of the Government. It was necessary that his successor should be some one high in the confidence of the Upper Canadian Reformers, and after careful consideration, Mr. W. P. Howland was chosen to fill the Postmaster-Generalship. He had gained ministerial experience as Minister of Finance in the Macdonald-Sicotte Government, and as Receiver-General in the Macdonald-Dorion Government; and he was moreover known as a man of high character and sound judgment. His appointment to office was well received by the country at large, and he was reëlected by acclamation for his constituency of West York.

No other event of special public interest occurred until the meeting of Parliament on the 19th of January, 1865, when the Governor, in his opening Speech, spoke strongly in favour of Confederation. He informed the Houses that the Home Government approved of the project, and would introduce the necessary legislation into the Imperial Parliament as soon as the several Provincial Legislatures should have declared their sanction. The session lasted nearly two months, the greater part of it being taken up by debates on the great scheme which, for the time, overshadowed every other. The strength of the Government was overwhelming, though the Opposition numbered in its ranks some of the ablest men in Parliament, including Messieurs Dorion, Holton, Dunkin, Huntington and J. S. Macdonald. The Address in Reply was carried in the Assembly at a single sitting, the only amendment being defeated by a vote of 64 to 25. This amendment, which was moved by Mr. A. A. Dorion, and seconded by Mr. Laframboise, was to the effect that the House did not desire to disturb existing political relations, or to create a new nationality. Only four of the minority represented Upper Canadian constituencies. Upper Canadian public opinion, indeed, was by this time almost unanimous in favour of Con-

federation. In the Lower section of the Province there was a formidable Opposition, but Mr. Cartier's influence—backed, as it was, by that of the priesthood—prevailed, and some of his speeches on the subject displayed a breadth of view for which the world had not previously given him credit.* The published debates of the session, on the subject of Confederation alone, occupy a volume of 1032 double-column imperial octavo pages. It is neither possible nor desirable to give even the briefest outline of them in the present work. It may be said of several of the speeches, however, that they would have been creditable to any assembly in the world, and that no Canadian can read them without a feeling of pride. Of the ministerial utterances, those of Messieurs Macdonald, Brown, Galt, McGee, and Cartier are worthy of careful study. Among those of the Opposition, several are specially noticeable, but that of Mr. Dunkin, which occupied two days and two nights in delivery, was a veritable address *per se*. "His speech," says the author already quoted from at the head of this chapter, "was certainly the most elaborate and the most exhaustive of all the speeches either for or against the proposition. Every conceivable and almost inconceivable objection was taken and worked out to its extremest limit. All that a well-read public man, all that a strong party politician, all that an ingenious lawyer, all that a thorough sophist, a dexterous logician, a timid patriot, or a prophet of evil could array against the scheme was brought up and pressed with unflagging energy."† But all things must end sooner or later, and the

* Mr. Cauchon was also an important factor in moulding Lower Canadian public opinion in favour of Confederation. For some months his pen was busily engaged in depicting the advantages which must ensue from the proposed change, and his *L'Union des Provinces de l'Amérique Britannique du Nord* was an important contribution to the Lower Canadian literature on the subject. It was translated into English by Mr. G. H. Macaulay, and was widely read both in Canada and the Maritime Provinces.

† *Confederation*, by the Hon. John Hamilton Gray, D.C.L., M.P.; Volume I., pp. 271, 272.

Confederation debates of 1865 obeyed the universal law. On Friday, the 10th of March, a motion introduced five weeks before by Attorney-General Macdonald: "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that she may be graciously pleased to cause a measure to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament, for the purpose of uniting the colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island in one Government, with provisions based on certain Resolutions which were adopted at a Conference of Delegates from the said colonies, held at the city of Quebec on the 10th of October, 1864:" was carried by a vote of 91 to 33.* A similar motion introduced by the Premier, Sir E. P. Taché, had been carried in the Legislative Council on the 20th of February by a vote of 45 to 15. In accordance with these proceedings, addresses were duly prepared and presented to Lord Monck for transmission to Her Majesty. On the 18th of March Parliament was prorogued, and during the following month a deputation consisting of four members of the Administration—Messieurs J. A. Macdonald, Cartier, Brown and Galt—proceeded to England to confer with the Imperial Government, and generally to promote the scheme of Confederation.

In the Maritime Provinces the project had meanwhile encountered serious opposition. In New Brunswick a general election had just taken place, and had resulted in the return of a majority hostile to the proposed union. Nova Scotia also showed a disposition to remain aloof, and the Assembly of that Province adopted resolutions in favour of a union of the Maritime Provinces alone. Newfoundland allowed the project to remain in abeyance; and the Prince Edward Island Legislature not only passed resolutions antagonistic to Confederation, but even went the length of repudiating the action of the Provincial delegates at the Quebec Conference.

* 54 of the majority and 8 of the minority were Upper Canadian representatives. The remaining 37 of the majority and 25 of the minority were Lower Canadians. This analysis affords a tolerably correct indication of the state of public opinion in the two Provinces.

Notwithstanding these discouragements, the Canadian Administration steadily persevered in the course upon which they had resolved. The four delegates to England received fresh assurances of Imperial concurrence in their plans. There was no thought of coercing the Maritime Provinces into accepting Confederation against their will, and their right either to accept or reject it was distinctly recognized by all parties concerned. An Imperial guarantee of a loan for the construction of an intercolonial line of railway was obtained by the Canadian delegates. The latter were authorized to say that Canada would devote all her resources, both in men and money, for the maintenance of her connection with the mother country. The Imperial Government admitted the reciprocal obligation of defending every portion of the Empire with all the resources at their command, and undertook to complete certain fortifications at Quebec, as well as to provide all necessary armaments. The cession of the North-West Territories by the Hudson's Bay Company was also taken into consideration, and measures were adopted to ascertain precisely what rights the Company possessed. The negotiations throughout were conducted with care and discretion, and the most important details of Confederation were fully discussed and settled. The delegates returned to Canada during the summer, and on the 8th of August Parliament met to receive and consider their report.

The American war had come to an end by the surrender of General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox in the preceding April. The assassination of President Lincoln had followed in less than a week afterwards. Both these events naturally created a profound sensation in this country, and some anxiety was felt as to the policy of the new President. The general feeling entertained by the people of the United States towards Canada was far from kindly. They not unnaturally resented the succour and sympathy which had been extended to the Southerners. The formal notice required for the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty had been given by the States,

and its operation would accordingly come to an end in March of the following year. The accession of President Johnson produced no change in the international relations, and the Government at Washington persistently refused to entertain any proposition for a renewal of the treaty.

On the 30th of July—a few days before the opening of Parliament—the Premier, Sir E. P. Taché, died, full of years and honours. He had been unable to stand the excitement of ministerial life, and his health had begun to give way soon after his acceptance of office in the preceding year. His position had rendered it necessary that he should take a more or less active part in the deliberations of the Government, and, as has been seen, he had been chosen to preside at the Quebec Conference. Though he had subsequently kept as much as possible aloof from public duties, he had been unable to avoid a share of fatigue and labour, which had told seriously upon his already weakened system. The immediate cause of his death was an internal abscess. His successor in the Cabinet was Sir N. F. Belleau, who accepted office upon the understanding that the original policy of the Coalition Government should be carried out, with such modifications only as the obstructions offered by the Maritime Provinces had rendered necessary. The new Premier's entry into the Government was due to the influence of Messieurs J. A. Macdonald and G. E. Cartier, and was not specially agreeable to the three Reform members, who however accepted him as a colleague rather than imperil the success of their policy by internal disunion.*

* "Without intending the slightest discourtesy to Sir Narcisse Belleau, we deem it right to remind you that we would not have selected that gentleman as successor to Sir Etienne Taché; but as he is the selection of Mr. Cartier and yourself, and as we are equally with you desirous of preventing the scheme for the Confederation of British America receiving injury from the appearance of disunion among us, we shall offer no objection to his appointment."—*Letter of the Hon. Geo. Brown to the Hon. J. A. Macdonald, dated 5th August, 1865.*

The short session which opened on the 8th of August was the final session of the Canadian Legislature at Quebec. It lasted barely six weeks, and was closed on the 18th of September. The ministerial strength was such that business was pushed through without effective opposition, and with very little delay. The report of the delegates to England was laid before the Assembly, and full explanations were given respecting the negotiations which had taken place. Correspondence between the Colonial Secretary and the Governor-General on the subject of Confederation was also submitted. Independently of the discussions on the proposed union, the most important proceeding of the session was the adoption of the Civil Code of Lower Canada. The Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1857 * had completed their labours, and all that remained to be done was to pass a measure bringing the result of those labours into operation. A Bill to effect this purpose was accordingly introduced and carried through by Attorney-General Cartier, who made a very able and effective speech on the subject. "He spoke," says one † who was present on the occasion, "with the feeling of a man who is conscious that he is placing the crowning stone on an edifice which has cost him years of labour and anxiety to build." By virtue of the Act then passed, and of a proclamation subsequently issued by the Governor under its authority, the code came into operation on the 1st of August, 1866.

Ten days after the adjournment of the session Lord Monck deputed the temporary charge of the Administration to Lieutenant-General Sir John Michel, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, and set out on a visit to England, where he remained about four months. The death of Lord Palmerston on the 18th of October, and the succession of Earl Russell as head of the English Cabinet, produced no change in the Imperial policy towards the colonies. Canada felt

* *Ante*, pp. 351, 352.

† The late Mr. S. J. Watson. See *The Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. I., p. 79.

that England was with her on the Confederation question, and the adoption of that project, so far, at least, as Canada was concerned, was no longer doubtful. During the autumn the public offices were removed to Ottawa, where the Parliament Buildings were rapidly approaching completion. As a matter of convenience the Cabinet meetings were for a short time held at Montreal.

All through the year 1865 various rumours were afloat as to a contemplated invasion of Canada from the United States by the Fenian Brotherhood. The close of the Southern rebellion had set free a horde of turbulent spirits, many of whom were Irish by birth or extraction. Their experience in the American army had given them a distaste for the ordinary pursuits of life, and, under the direction of adventurous and unprincipled leaders, they had for some months past been forming plans for the liberation of Ireland from the "thraldom of the Saxon." As a step in that direction they conceived the idea of making a descent upon Canada, and of making it the base of their operations against England. That they really expected to succeed in such an undertaking, with such means as they had at their command, seems almost incredible; but anything was better in their estimation than settling down to honest labour, and it was resolved that the enterprise should at any rate be attempted. They were permitted to make their preparations openly, and there was no pretence of secrecy as to their intentions. In Canada there was a disposition to treat the movement with contempt, but precautions were nevertheless taken, and volunteers were called out, who responded to the call with cheerful alacrity. Such was the state of affairs when the winter of 1865-6 was ushered in.

The most noteworthy event that marked the close of the year was the withdrawal of Mr. Brown from the Cabinet; an event which was consummated on the 21st of December. The reason assigned for his withdrawal renders a brief explanation necessary. The impending termination of the Reciprocity Treaty with the

States was regarded with much anxiety by the mercantile community of Canada. It was inevitable that exports and imports should be seriously affected, and it was deemed very desirable that communications should be opened with South America and the West Indies, with a view to the establishment of new avenues of trade. A Commission, under the direction of Mr. McDougall, was appointed to effect that object. But it was still more desirable that a renewal of the treaty with the States should be obtained, and though the Washington authorities had hitherto refused to entertain any proposal to that effect, it was resolved that a further effort should be made. In compliance with a suggestion from the Home Government, a Confederate Council on Commercial Treaties had been formed at Quebec during the progress of the late session. It consisted of representatives of each Province of the proposed Confederation, and its members matured their plans in the course of the ensuing autumn. It recommended that a deputation should be sent to Washington to make a final attempt at renewal. The Government adopted the recommendation, and appointed delegates. The terms upon which the latter were empowered to negotiate formed the pretext for Mr. Brown's retirement from the Government. He found himself out of accord with his colleagues on the subject. He considered that Canada could exist without reciprocity, and that it was a mistake to exhibit eagerness by sending delegates to the American capital. His contention will be best understood by a short extract from his explanations to Parliament during the next session, when the Reciprocity Treaty had come to an end. "I was," said he, "as much in favour of a renewal of reciprocity as any member of this House, but I wanted a fair treaty; and we should not overlook the fact, while admitting its benefits, that the treaty was attended with some disadvantages to us. I contend that we should not have gone to Washington as suitors for any terms they were pleased to give us. We were satisfied with the treaty, and the American Gov-

ernment should have come to us with a proposition, since they, not we, desired a change."*

It seems to be generally understood that, though the reciprocity negotiations afforded a suitable pretext for Mr. Brown's retirement from the Ministry, the real ground was to be found in a deeper source—in the natural antagonism between men of diverse temperaments. Neither politically nor otherwise had he anything, beyond his manhood, in common with the other leading members of the Government. The inevitable friction produced by the contact of such opposites had been to some extent perceptible ever since the formation of the coalition. Mr. Brown doubtless felt that he and his two Reform colleagues were overweighted by the numerical odds against them in the Cabinet, and it was but natural that he should chafe under the consciousness that he was in a false position: a position where his influence was not commensurate with his abilities and his ambition. But such a state of things must surely have been foreseen, and the cost of the enterprise ought to have been fully taken into account before it was entered upon. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether Mr. Brown should have entered the Government in the first place; but there would seem to be no escape from the conclusion that, being once in, he ought to have endured a heavy tax upon his forbearance rather than resign, until the scheme of Confederation had been perfected.† The acceptance of the scheme by the Government had been no mean triumph for him, but by deserting the ship in mid-ocean he deprived himself of much of the eclat which would justly have been his due had he assisted to steer her into port.

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* See the reports of the debate in the Assembly of June 15th, 1866.

† "Either he ought not to have joined the Government, or he ought not to have left it at that time. The people sustained him in the first; they condemned him in the latter. The reason he gave no one accepted as the real reason, and his opponents did not hesitate to say that he left the Government because he was not permitted to be its master."—*Gray on Confederation*, Vol. I., p. 329.

Mr. Brown announced that he left the Government with no unkind feelings towards any member of it; but it was not long before he was once more in violent Opposition. He had doubtless at first counted upon being able to take his two Reform colleagues with him out of the Ministry. It was soon made clear to him that he would not be able to do so. Mr. Howland disapproved of the course of his leader, and resolved to remain in the Cabinet. The leadership of the Reform element therein was offered to him, and, after consultation with his friends, accepted. As for Mr. McDougall, he was absent from the country on a trade mission at the time, but upon his return he announced his approval of Mr. Howland's course, and his own determination to emulate that gentleman's example by remaining in the Government. The Presidency of the Council, vacated by Mr. Brown's retirement, was offered to and accepted by Mr. Fergusson-Blair, whose constituents showed their approval of his acceptance by reëlecting him.

In the beginning of 1866 delegates were sent to Washington, as had been agreed upon, to make a final attempt to obtain a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty. Their mission was a total failure, and no further attempt in that direction was made until several years after the accomplishment of Confederation. For several months before the expiration of the treaty in March, the Canadian railways and the international ferries were almost monopolized by outgoing produce, cattle and horses, which had been purchased by Americans in this Province. For all these commodities the Canadian sellers obtained good prices, and our country enjoyed certain benefits to counterbalance the disadvantages arising from the termination of the treaty. Our manufactures were stimulated, an impetus was given to our foreign trade, and Confederation itself was to some extent promoted.

Meanwhile the Fenians on the other side of the boundary-line continued their preparations, and announced a series of combined

movements upon Canada, to take place on St. Patrick's Day, the 17th of March. Provision was made for their reception, but the appointed time passed by without any attempt on their part. In April a Fenian demonstration was made on the frontier of New Brunswick, but it was a very insignificant affair, and was abandoned almost as soon as entered upon. All through the spring and early summer, however, it was evident that a more serious attempt would sooner or later be made. Towards the end of May the filibusters began to mass their forces at several points, more especially at Buffalo, whence they menaced the Niagara frontier. A little before midnight of the 31st of the month, about 900 of them, under the command of an Irish-American named O'Neil, repaired to Black Rock, where boats had been provided to convey them across to the Canada shore. Before daylight on the following morning they landed without opposition about a mile below the village of Fort Erie. Arms were distributed among them, and pickets were thrown out in every direction. They advanced upon and took possession of the village, demanded rations, and vainly invited the coöperation of the inhabitants. During the day—the 1st of June—they destroyed a portion of the Grand Trunk Railway track, burned a bridge, and cut the telegraph wires. They appropriated all the horses and provisions they could lay hands on, but did not otherwise maltreat the inhabitants. Early in the forenoon the United States gunboat *Michigan* began to patrol the river, avowedly to prevent any further breaches of the neutrality laws; but its commander did not attempt to interfere with small boats which crossed and recrossed all day, whereby O'Neil received additional stores and reinforcements.

The news that a horde of marauders had landed on our soil aroused a feeling of burning indignation from one end of the Province to the other. All classes of the community shared in the feeling, and in the patriotic enthusiasm which accompanied it. Had

the military experience and capacity of the Canadians been commensurate with their ardour at this juncture, very few of O'Neil's myrmidons would ever have found their way back across the Niagara river. But no suitable provision had been made by the military authorities for such a contingency, and it was inevitable that there should be a deficiency of proper equipments, as well as a want of harmony in the arrangements. The nearest regular troops to the point of invasion were stationed at Hamilton and Toronto. They were at once despatched to the Niagara peninsula by Major-General Napier, Military Commander of the District. The services of the volunteers were also called into requisition. Lieutenant-Colonel John Stoughton Dennis, Brigade Major, received orders to call out six hundred of the Toronto force. Major Gillmor, of the Queen's Own, supplied nearly all the complement demanded, and they, with the 13th battalion, of Hamilton (under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Booker), and other volunteer corps, were sent to Port Colborne to protect the Welland Canal. The entire expedition was under the direction of Colonel George Peacocke, of the 16th Regiment, who accompanied the regulars to Chippewa, where he was soon afterwards joined by the Governor-General's Body Guard, the 10th Royals, and several small companies of volunteers. It is admitted on all hands that this gentleman was a capable and gallant officer, but he suffered from the disadvantage of not being familiar with the topography of the frontier, and of being unprovided with any map sufficiently minute to be of essential service.*

Having arrived at Chippewa, Colonel Peacocke was not long in maturing his plans. He resolved upon effecting a junction of his forces with those at Port Colborne, the junction to take place on

* "For the want of proper topographical information it seems difficult to find an excuse. It is as essential to the defence of a frontier as ammunition is to the discharge of a firearm; and the attainment of it falls as much within a legitimate military expenditure as the preliminary drilling of a body of men."—*Gray on Confederation*, p. 362.

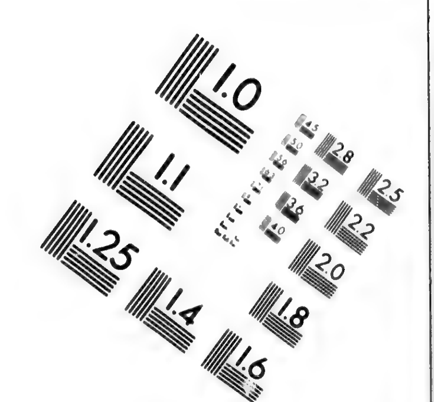
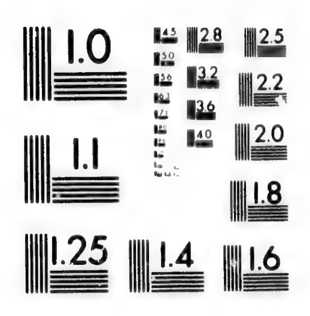
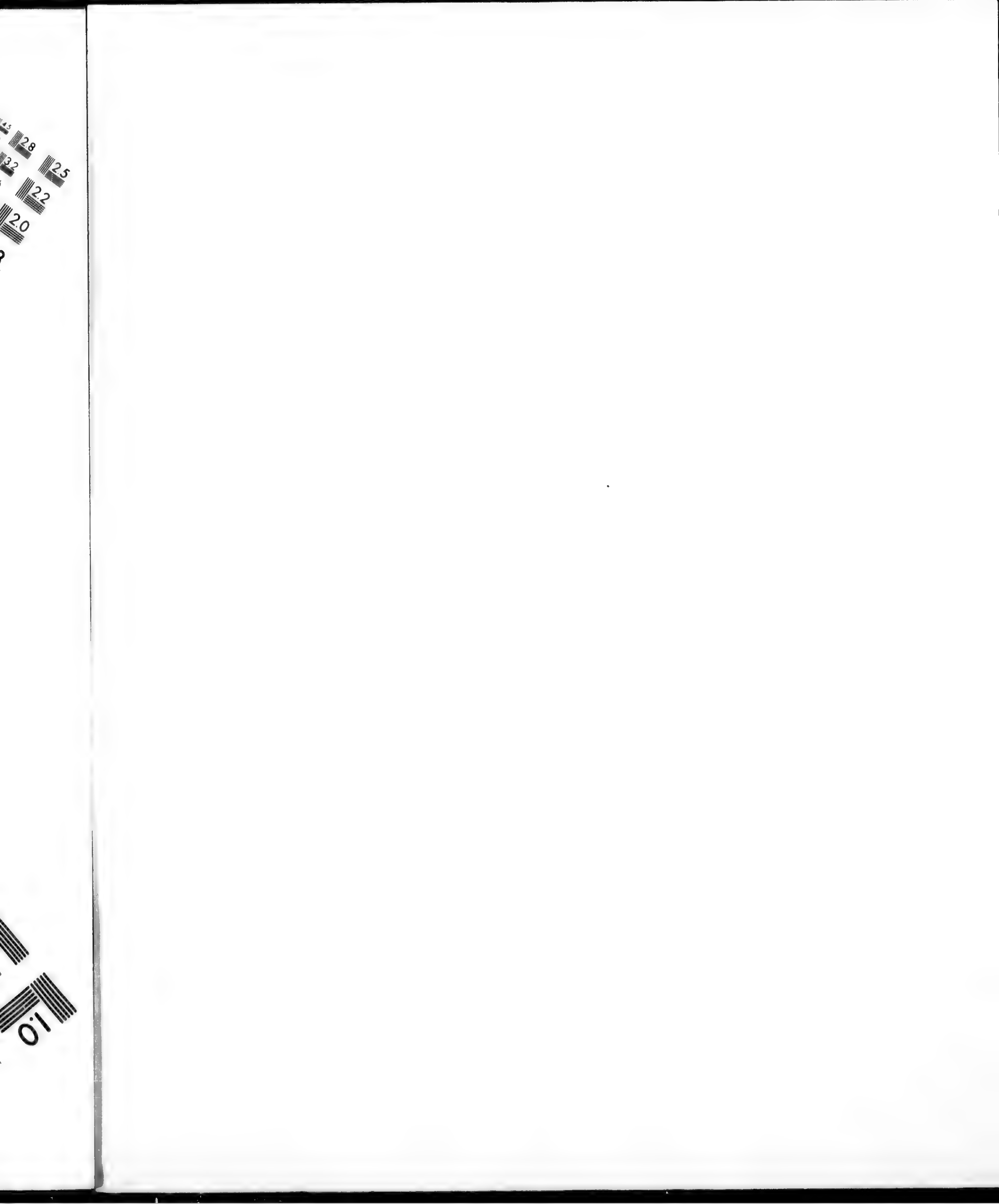


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the following morning, at Stevensville, a small village situated a few miles northwestwardly from Fort Erie. Captain Akers, of the Royal Engineers, was despatched as a messenger to Port Colborne, with instructions to the officer in command there to proceed to Stevensville, with the greater part of his forces, in time to join the regulars between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the following day. As Colonel Peacocke was not well informed as to the topography of the neighbourhood, he left the officer in command of the volunteers to choose whatever route might seem best. Captain Akers reached Port Colborne about two in the morning of the 2nd. His message was delivered to Lieutenant-Colonel Booker, who, being the senior officer, had assumed the chief command there. But certain information which had reached Port Colborne several hours before had filled the volunteer officers with military ardour. They had heard that the Fenian force at Fort Erie was much smaller than had been supposed. It was said that many of the latter had been drinking hard ever since landing in the country, and that they were in no condition to resist an attack from sober and determined men. After some deliberation, the two volunteer officers, in conjunction with Captain Akers, conceived an independent scheme, involving important modifications of that formed by Colonel Peacocke. In pursuance of this scheme, Booker, with his forces, was to start for Fort Erie by rail, in time to reach his destination at eight o'clock next morning. Dennis and Akers, with a company of volunteer artillery, were to embark on a steam tug at Port Colborne, and proceed round the coast and down the Niagara river to reconnoitre, returning to Fort Erie in time to coöperate with Booker at eight o'clock. "Should Colonel Peacocke approve of this," says Captain Akers in his report, "he would march by the river road from Chippewa, and make a combined attack with Colonel Booker at some point between Fort Erie and Black Creek, cutting off the enemy's retreat by the river—the tug to be employed

in cruising up and down the river, cutting off any boats that might attempt to escape, and communicating between the forces advancing from Chippewa and from Fort Erie." The plan was telegraphed to Colonel Peacocke at Chippewa, but Dennis and Akers did not wait for his approval.* They started from Port Colborne at four in the morning, on the tug *Robb*, taking with them the Welland Garrison Battery and a part of the Dunnville Naval Company. Soon after their departure Booker received a telegram from Colonel Peacocke expressing disapproval of the proposed modifications, and enjoining adherence to the original plan. It was too late to recall Dennis and Akers, but Booker resolved to fulfil his instructions as far as possible, and being apparently determined not to be too late on the ground, he placed his men on board the train and started from Port Colborne about five in the morning. He proceeded by rail as far as Ridgeway, where he left the train, with his forces, and proceeded on foot in the direction of Stevensville. Meanwhile, O'Neil had moved his forces westward, his object doubtless being the destruction of the locks on the Welland Canal. His movements were neither known to nor suspected by Colonel Booker, who, greatly to his astonishment, encountered the enemy's outposts about two miles from Ridgeway. After a hurried consultation with Major Gillmor, who was in command of the Queen's Own, it was resolved to assume the offensive, more especially as it was believed that Colonel Peacocke must be very near. The volunteers advanced promptly at the word of command, and so valiantly did they

* "The only way in which their conduct can be accounted for is, that they were so confident that Colonel Peacocke would at once fall in with their plan of operation in lieu of his own, that they never, for one moment, calculated that his answer would be in the negative."—*The Fenian Raid at Fort Erie*, etc., by Major (now Lieut.-Col.) George T. Denison, Jr. Toronto, 1866. This little work contains what is beyond comparison the best published account of the affair from a purely military point of view. The more comprehensive account by Mr. Alexander Somerville, published at Hamilton in 1866, also contains a great mass of valuable details, as well as some scathing criticism on the defective equipments for the campaign. The writer of these pages cheerfully acknowledges his obligations to both the above-mentioned narratives.

demean themselves that they actually succeeded in driving back the enemy's advanced line for some distance. Considering that this was effected by raw levies, for the most part made up of young collegians and clerks, it was a gallant achievement, and for a time it seemed as though the volunteers would sweep all before them. But, while all was going thus favourably, a telegram from Colonel Peacocke was placed in Booker's hands. It had been forwarded from Port Colborne by a special messenger, and its contents were not of a nature to cheer the officer to whom it was addressed. It instructed him to delay his departure from Port Colborne for two hours, as the regulars could not start from Chippewa so early as had been expected. This message, of course, had been intended to reach Colonel Booker before his departure from Port Colborne. Instead of delaying his departure two hours, he had actually started earlier than had been specified, thereby disturbing Colonel Peacocke's calculations by at least three hours. Booker doubtless took in the situation, and perceived that no present assistance was to be looked for from the regulars. Just then an alarm was heard to the effect that cavalry were approaching, and he ordered Major Gillmor to form his battalion into a square. This would have been the proper course had the report as to the approach of cavalry been well founded. But as matter of fact there were no cavalry, and the formation of a square made a conspicuous target for the Fenians. The latter were quick to seize the advantage, and their bullets whistled fast and thick among the ranks of the devoted Canadian volunteers. It soon became evident that there had been a false alarm, and Major Gillmor endeavoured to extend his regiment, which he partially succeeded in effecting, but the rear portion, galled by the hot fire of the enemy, gradually fell back, and could not be re-formed. The order was then given to retire. Yet a few moments, and the volunteers were in full retreat, which was continued all the way to Port Colborne. The Fenians followed

for a short distance only. Our loss was one officer and eight men killed, and six officers and twenty-five men wounded. The Fenian loss has never been ascertained, but it could scarcely have been less than our own.

O'Neil did not think proper to pursue the temporary advantage he had gained. Hearing that Colonel Peacocke and a body of regular troops were advancing against him, he fell back on Fort Erie. Colonel Dennis and Captain Akers, with the artillerymen, had meanwhile landed there and picked up about sixty stragglers, some of whom were Fenians and others mere camp-followers. O'Neil soon recaptured the village, but did not succeed in setting free the prisoners, who had been secured on board the tug. During the ensuing night he and his forces, dreading the expected arrival of the regulars, made the best of their way back across the river, but before they could disembark they were arrested by the United States authorities, and prevented from indulging in any further demonstrations for the time. On Sunday morning Colonel Peacocke and his forces reached Fort Erie, too late to inflict punishment upon the main body of Fenians, but in time to capture a few stragglers in the neighbourhood. These, together with the prisoners on board the tug, were sent to Toronto and lodged in gaol. During the following autumn and winter they were tried under an old statute passed at the time of the Canadian Rebellion, whereby subjects of a foreign state entering this country for the purpose of levying war were rendered liable to the penalties imposed by the Act. Many of the prisoners were discharged for want of evidence. Others were convicted and sentenced to death, but the sentences were afterwards commuted to imprisonment in the Provincial Penitentiary, and not one of them suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

Such, in brief, is the history of the Fenian raid upon the Niagara frontier in June, 1866. There were other demonstrations of a

similar character in the course of the month, and each had a somewhat similar ending. A horde collected at Ogdensburg, professedly for the object of crossing over to Prescott, and thence to Ottawa, the Provincial capital. The massing of a number of troops on the Canada side, however, and the patrolling of a British gunboat in the St. Lawrence, put an end to the operations of the Fenians in that neighbourhood. The latter subsequently gathered in considerable force opposite Cornwall, but the concentration of a strong body of volunteers there caused them to abandon their designs in that quarter also. About 1,800 of them then collected at St. Albans, Vermont, whence, on the 7th of June, they passed over into Canada; but the advance of troops against them sent them flying back across the border, where a number of their leaders were arrested by American officials for breach of the neutrality laws. The United States authorities, impressed by the urgent representations of the British Minister at Washington, had by this time become alive to the necessity of doing their duty. The President issued a proclamation requiring all officers of his Government to exert every effort for the repression of further attacks on Canada. General Meade was despatched to the frontier, where he took possession of all the Fenian arms and munitions of war that he could find, arrested the ringleaders, and sent the rank and file to their homes in New York city and elsewhere. Quietness was soon restored all along the frontier. The expense to the Province of the several operations of these marauders was heavy, but the mere pecuniary loss was felt to be a very small affair as compared with the loss of a number of precious lives. Canada testified her sorrow by raising an imposing monument in the Queen's Park, Toronto, to the memory of those who fell in her defence, and by awarding pensions for the support of the widows and orphans who mourned their loss.

On the 8th of June, while our country was yet disturbed by the excitement incidental to this series of petty invasions, the last session

of the Provincial Parliament met at Ottawa. The opening Speech announced his Excellency's expectation that the measure of Confederation would shortly be carried into effect, and that the next assembling of Parliament would be participated in not only by representatives of Canada, but by those of all the colonies of British North America. Two Acts were hurried through both Houses in time to admit of his Excellency's assenting to them before his withdrawal after the delivery of the Speech from the Throne. One of these suspended the Habeas Corpus Act for a year, and the other provided for the protection of Lower Canada against further unlawful foreign invasion. The session lasted till the 15th of August. A series of resolutions was passed defining the constitutions of Upper and Lower Canada, under the proposed measure of Confederation. These resolutions were subsequently embodied in the Imperial Act, which will presently be considered. The session was also marked by a good deal of important legislation. Prominent among the Acts passed was one making various changes in the Provincial tariff. The articles which, under the Act of 1859, were liable to a duty of twenty per cent., were now made liable to a duty of fifteen per cent. only; and a number of commodities which up to this time paid twenty-five per cent.—including boots and shoes, harness, saddlery and ready-made clothing—were also placed at the low rate of fifteen per cent. With a view to the encouragement of domestic productions, many articles used for manufacturing purposes were placed on the free list, and the deficiency thereby created was made up by an increased impost on whisky. A Code of Civil Procedure for Lower Canada, which had been prepared with much care and labour by commissioners appointed for the purpose, was also adopted by the Legislature. A few days before the close of the session Mr. Galt resigned his place as Minister of Finance, together with his seat in the Cabinet, in consequence of certain complications arising out of a Bill introduced by Mr. Langevin respecting education in Lower Canada. The ex-

Minister announced, however, that he was still prepared to support the general policy of the Administration. The portfolio of Minister of Finance was soon afterwards accepted by Mr. Howland, who was succeeded as Postmaster-General by Mr. Langevin. The office of Solicitor-General vacated by the gentleman last-named was for some months thereafter allowed to remain unfilled.

The Confederation project had meanwhile been considerably advanced in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In the former there had been another appeal to the people, and the advocates of Confederation had won the day. In Nova Scotia the scheme had encountered serious opposition, but had finally been carried by a considerable majority in the Local Legislature. Prince Edward Island still continued hostile, and Newfoundland listless. Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick accordingly determined to proceed with the scheme on their own account, leaving the two Island Provinces to follow at their leisure. In November (1866) a Canadian deputation, consisting of Messieurs (J. A.) Macdonald, Cartier, Galt, Howland, McDougall and Langevin, repaired to England, whither they had been preceded by representatives from each of the other two Provinces interested. The Nova Scotia delegates were Messieurs Tupper, Henry, Archibald, McCully, and the present Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Dominion, Sir William Johnston Ritchie, who was then Solicitor-General of the Province. The New Brunswick representatives were Messieurs Tilley, Fisher, Mitchell, Johnston and Robert Duncan Wilmot, the last-named gentleman being the present Lieutenant-Governor. All the delegates assembled at the Westminster Palace Hotel on the 4th of December, when Mr. Macdonald was elected chairman, and the Conference was duly organized. Lord Monck reached London from Canada during the month, and lent his assistance to the delegates, as well as to the Imperial Government.* The Conference sat until the 24th of

* During his absence from Canada Sir John Michel again took the direction of public affairs in this country.

December, by which time all the important details had been discussed and finally adjusted. Certain concessions were made to the Maritime Provinces, and various modifications were made in the resolutions passed by the Quebec Conference in 1864, but the project remained in all essential respects unchanged. In conjunction with the Imperial law officers, the Conference then prepared certain draft Bills, which were subsequently amalgamated into a harmonious whole, and submitted by the Imperial Government to Parliament, which met on the 5th of February, 1867. On the 29th of March following, the amalgamated Bill, having passed through all its stages in both Houses, received the royal assent. A fortnight later—on the 12th of April—another Imperial Act was passed authorizing the Commissioners of the Treasury to guarantee interest on a loan not exceeding £3,000,000 sterling, for the construction of an intercolonial railway between Halifax and the St. Lawrence. This project, which had been so many years under discussion, had at last become a political necessity, and could no longer be postponed. The colonial delegates, having accomplished the objects of their mission, returned to their homes. Her Majesty was empowered to give effect by proclamation to the Confederation Act—technically known as "the British North America Act, 1867"—and in accordance with this provision a royal proclamation was issued at Windsor Castle on the 22nd of May, appointing the first of July following as the date upon which it should come into force.

The Act provided that the three Provinces theretofore known as Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, should form and be ONE DOMINION, under the name of CANADA. The Dominion was divided into four Provinces, named Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; the boundaries of Ontario and Quebec corresponding with those of the old Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and the boundaries of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick remaining unchanged. The executive authority and the command of all

naval and military forces were continued and vested in the Queen and her successors, represented by the Governor-General or other chief executive officer or administrator for the time being. Provision was made for the constitution of a Council, to be styled the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, to aid and advise in carrying on the Government. The members were to be chosen by the Governor-General, and to be removable at his pleasure. Ottawa was declared to be the Seat of Government until the Queen should otherwise direct. The legislative power was vested in a Parliament, consisting of the Queen, an Upper House called the Senate, and a House of Commons. It was declared that there should be a session of Parliament once at least in every year, so that twelve months should not elapse between session and session. The elective system introduced by the Act of 1856 with respect to members of the Upper House was abandoned, and it was provided that the Senate, to consist of 72 life members—24 for Ontario, 24 for Quebec, and 12 for each of the two Maritime Provinces—should be appointed by the Crown. Provision was made for increasing the membership, but the number was at no time to exceed 78.* With respect to the House of Commons, the principle of Representation by Population was adopted. The basis chosen for the original adjustment was the census of 1861; but it was provided that there should be a readjustment in 1871 and every ten years thereafter, upon the taking of the periodical census.† The representation of the Province of Quebec was permanently fixed at 65 members, and that of each of the other Provinces was to bear the same relation to the population thereof that 65 should from time to time bear to the

* But by the final clause of the Act it was provided that the number might be extended to 82 in case of the admission of Newfoundland. The contingency has not arisen, but the increase to 78 has taken place in consequence of the admission of Prince Edward Island, Manitoba and British Columbia

† Under this provision there have been two readjustments consequent upon the censuses of 1871 and 1881. See Dominion Statute 35 Vic. (1872) c. 13 ; also the Act of last session 45 Vic. (1882) c. 3.

population of Quebec. The entire representation was for the time placed at 181, made up of 82 members for Ontario, 65 for Quebec, 19 for Nova Scotia, and 15 for New Brunswick. Provision was made for increased representation, but the proportion fixed by the Act was not to be disturbed. The duration of a House of Commons was not to exceed five years. Except as otherwise provided, all existing laws and regulations, judicial, Parliamentary and statutory, were continued.

Constitutions were also provided for the four Provinces included in the Dominion. A Lieutenant-Governor, with a salary fixed and provided by the Federal Parliament, was assigned to each Province. A local Legislature, the composition whereof was adjusted to the preferences of the inhabitants, was also assigned to each. Thus, the Legislature of Ontario was made to consist of the Lieutenant-Governor and a single Chamber, called the Legislative Assembly. Two chambers, consisting of a Council and Assembly, were assigned to each of the other Provinces. The jurisdiction of the local Legislatures was restricted to internal affairs, whereas that of the Federal Parliament was extended to matters affecting the Dominion at large. Provision was made by the Act for the admission of the other British North American Provinces into the Confederation, in case such admission should be sought on the one hand and approved of on the other. It was moreover declared to be the duty of the Government and Parliament of Canada to promptly begin and proceed with the construction of the Intercolonial Railway. Such are the most important provisions of the British North America Act.

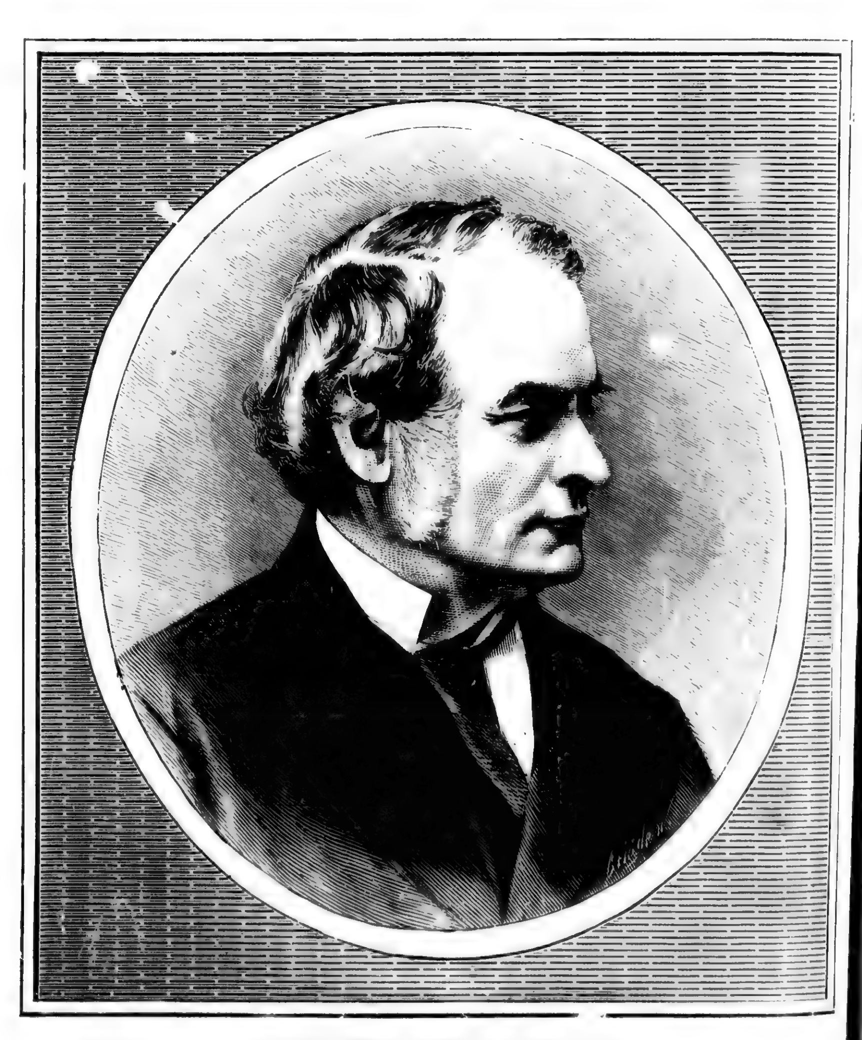
The royal proclamation of May 22nd announced the names of the 72 Senators whose appointment had been provided for, and who consisted of 36 Conservatives and 36 Reformers. The birthday of the Dominion was looked forward to with some expectation, and upon its arrival it was celebrated as a holiday throughout the land. On the same day Lord Monck issued a

proclamation announcing his appointment as Governor-General of the new Dominion. It was deemed fitting that the Governor under whose *régime* Confederation had been brought about should enjoy whatever honour pertained to inaugurating the new system. His Excellency in like manner considered that Mr. Macdonald was entitled to the honour of forming the first Administration of the Dominion, and he accordingly committed the task to his hands. Mr. Macdonald, recognizing the necessity of a strong Government, resolved to form a coalition, and to bring together, irrespective of party considerations, those gentlemen who represented majorities in the respective Provinces to which they belonged. "I do not want it to be felt by any section in the country," said he, "that they have no representative in the Cabinet, and no influence in the Government. And as there are now no issues to divide parties, and as all that is required is to have in the Government the men who are best adapted to put the new machinery in motion, I desire to ask those to join me who have the confidence and represent the majorities in the various sections, of those who were in favour of the adoption of this system of government, and who wish to see it satisfactorily carried out." As matter of fact the membership of the new Government had been arranged some time before, and the names unofficially announced to the country. They were now announced officially, as follows. It will be seen that the number of portfolios had been slightly increased, and that the nomenclature of some of the Departments had undergone a change.

The Hon. J. A. Macdonald, Premier and Minister of Justice.
" " Alexander Campbell, Postmaster-General.
" " A. J. Fergusson-Blair, President of the Privy Council.
" " W. P. Howland, Minister of Inland Revenue.
" " William McDougall, Minister of Public Works.
" " G. E. Cartier, Minister of Militia and Defence.
" " A. T. Galt, Minister of Finance.

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SIR SAMUEL LEONARD TILLEY.

The Hon. J. C. Chapais, Minister of Agriculture.
" " H. L. Langevin, Secretary of State of Canada.
" " S. L. Tilley, Minister of Customs.
" " Peter Mitchell, Minister of Marine and Fisheries.
" " A. G. Archibald, Secretary of State for the Provinces.
" " Edward Kenny, Receiver-General.

Of the gentlemen composing this Administration, the first five represented Ontario, the next four represented Quebec, the next two New Brunswick, and the last two Nova Scotia. The Conservative element was represented by Messieurs Macdonald, Campbell, Cartier, Galt, Chapais and Langevin. The other members were all professedly Reformers except Mr. Kenny, who had some time before passed from the Reform to the Conservative ranks. Five of the thirteen —Messieurs Campbell, Fergusson-Blair, Chapais, Mitchell and Kenny —were on the list of newly-appointed Senators. Of these five, two were from Ontario, and each of the other Provinces was represented by one.

Lord Monck, having been sworn into office by Chief Justice Draper, in the Chamber of the Executive Council, at Ottawa, announced that Her Majesty had instructed him, through the Colonial Secretary, to confer the title of Knight Commander of the Bath on the Hon. John A. Macdonald, and the title of Companion of the Bath on Messieurs Cartier, Galt, McDougall, Howland, Tilley and Tupper, for their distinguished services in bringing about Confederation. Mr. Cartier and Mr. Galt declined the proffered honour, and this unequal distribution of imperial dignities led to the first and only serious rupture that ever took place between Messieurs Macdonald and Cartier. The latter considered himself slighted in not receiving honours of equal dignity with those conferred upon Mr. Macdonald. He attributed the slight to the advice of his quondam *fidus Achates*, and he felt that he had deserved better things at the hands of one who had for years carried

on the Government of Canada by means of majorities obtained through his, Mr. Cartier's, instrumentality. Mr.—henceforward Sir John—Macdonald set himself to repair the diplomatic blunder that had been committed. A year later Mr. Cartier was created a baronet of the United Kingdom—a higher dignity than had been conferred on Sir John. This did something to mollify the recipient, who however felt as though reparation had only been made under pressure, and was not disposed to value his newly-acquired dignity so highly as if it had been spontaneously conferred. In a word, the golden bowl had been shivered, and the relations between him and Sir John were never again of that truly cordial nature which had subsisted between them in the old days which, in more senses than one, had forever passed away.

With the swearing-in of the new Ministry the old one of course came to an end. Confederation having been fully accomplished, the conditions of the compact entered into between the rival political parties in 1864 were fulfilled, and the compact itself was ended. Another event that marked the birthday of the Dominion was the appointment by the Federal Government of the first Lieutenant-Governors of the four Provinces. The appointment for Quebec was conferred upon Sir N. F. Belleau. In the other three Provinces the senior military officers were temporarily appointed to act. Major-General Henry William Stisted thus became first Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, Lieutenant-General Sir W. F. Williams of Nova Scotia, and Major-General Charles Hastings Doyle of New Brunswick.





THE HON. ISAAC BURPEE.



Chapter XL.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA.

"We know that political parties have their beginning and their end. Babels are built, and confusion of tongues ensues. But when discussion is pushed to the extreme, and enthusiasts and demagogues have gone mad, the turning-point is reached, and an union of those who have their senses left marks the beginning of a new era. When the time does come for a renewal of strife, we spin around in accordance with the immutable laws by which the political world is regulated, and we cannot, if we would, avoid the scrambling, jostling, quarrelling and fighting incident to the enjoyment of free institutions in a free country."—*Canada First; or, Our New Nationality*, by W. A. Foster.



FOR some time before the actual coming into existence of the Dominion, it had become apparent that a considerable part of the population was not prepared to receive the new order of things with enthusiasm. In the Maritime Provinces the mercurial state of public opinion was proved by the fact that a strong anti-Union feeling was again prevalent among the people. To such a length was this feeling carried that many persons came out boldly in favour of annexation to the United States. In Lower Canada the *Rouge* party, to a man, were opposed to Confederation, and among them also there was a strong predilection for annexation. In Ontario public opinion was almost unanimous in favour of Confederation, and no appreciable part of the community had any leanings towards the United States, but many Reformers, following the lead of *The Globe*, came out strongly against the coalition. As has been seen, the membership of the proposed new Government had become generally known, and among the names were those of William Pearce Howland and William McDougall. The acceptance of office by those gentlemen was denounced by *The Globe*

as an act of political treason. The great influence of that journal and its editor naturally won considerable support for its opinions, and the Reform party were greatly agitated on the subject of the alleged defection of two of their most prominent members.* On the 27th and 28th of June a general convention of the Reform party met at Toronto, and passed a number of important resolutions, one of which was strongly denunciatory of the proposed coalition. Messieurs McDougall and Howland, being opportunely in Toronto, were specially invited to attend. They accordingly presented themselves before the convention, and explained their reasons for joining the Government. Mr. Howland's plea was that a new era was about to be inaugurated; that new and great interests had arisen which were entitled to consideration, and that the old party lines of the past were on the point of being swept away. The address of Mr. McDougall embodied an eloquent and powerful defence of the coalition, and produced a visible effect upon the convention; but Mr. Brown's influence was paramount, and carried all before it. The two coalitionists were practically "read out of the Reform party," so far as the convention was concerned. Mr. McDougall has never since been regarded as belonging to it. As for Mr. (now Sir William) Howland, he has for several years past been once more identified with the party under the auspices of which he first entered political life.

The general elections for the House of Commons came off in the

* The question here presents itself: Why did not Mr. Fergusson-Blair encounter his share of obloquy from *The Globe* and those members of the Reform party who echoed its opinions? That gentleman was an old and prominent member of the party, and he had, equally with Messieurs McDougall and Howland, been enrolled in the ranks of the coalition. The answer is twofold. Mr. Fergusson-Blair was an elderly man, in feeble health, who had ceased to take any important part in public affairs. His political influence was practically at an end. He was regarded as one whose day was past, and whom it was not worth while to attack. The other reason is doubtless to be found in the fact that he was not, like Mr. McDougall and Mr. Howland, an active party to the conditions of the compact entered into in 1864.

summer and early autumn. In spite of the utmost exertions of the anti-coalitionists, the people of Ontario and Quebec returned an overwhelming majority of supporters of the Government. There was a widespread feeling, even among those who disapproved of coalitions in general, that the new Government should have a fair trial. Mr. Brown himself sustained defeat in South Ontario, and did not attempt to obtain a seat elsewhere. This defeat was disastrous to the Opposition, who were much depressed by the circumstance, and the Government thereby gained material support in several doubtful constituencies. In the Province of Quebec only twelve anti-coalitionists secured election. The Government, however, sustained a check in that Province in the case of Mr. Chapais, Minister of Agriculture, who contested the constituency of Kamouraska with Mr. Charles Alphonse Pautaléon Pelletier, an uncompromising opponent of the coalition. Mr. Pelletier secured a considerable majority of votes over his opponent, but owing to irregularities in the proceedings a special return was made which had the practical effect of disfranchising the constituency for several months. Still, this quasi-defeat was not a matter of much moment to the Government, as Mr. Chapais retained his portfolio, and in the following January was called to the Senate. In New Brunswick, notwithstanding the strong expressions of disfavour to the Union which had been expressed during the few preceding months, the Government party carried twelve seats out of fifteen. In Nova Scotia alone was the result strongly antagonistic. The inhabitants of that Province had from the first been hostile to the Union, and their predilections had been worked upon to the fullest extent. The Hon. Joseph Howe, who had for more than a quarter of a century been one of the most influential men in the Province, and who was unquestionably the first natural orator that British America has ever produced, had thought proper to take a stand hostile to Confederation.* His

* For the probable reasons which actuated Mr. Howe in his opposition, see *The Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. II., p. 128.

example was vehemently enforced by his precept. To his influence the result of the general elections in Nova Scotia must doubtless be in great measure attributed. Of the nineteen members returned, one only—Dr. Tupper—was a supporter of the Administration. Nearly all the leading members of the anti-Union party were returned; whereas Mr. Archibald, Secretary of State for the Provinces, was defeated, and compelled to resign his seat in the Cabinet. Except in the cases of Mr. Archibald and Mr. Chapais, however, all the Ministers were returned, and when the total result became known it was found that the Government could command nearly three-fourths of the entire vote in the House of Commons.

The elections for the local Legislatures in the different Provinces resulted similarly to those for the House of Commons. In the Maritime Provinces public opinion was very largely moulded by individuals. The people of New Brunswick were soon brought to look upon the new order of things with complacency, whereas in Nova Scotia all but two of the thirty-eight members returned to the local Assembly were anti-Unionists. The diatribes of Mr. Howe, Mr. Annand and others roused a feeling of opposition to Confederation which can hardly be said, even at the present time, to have wholly passed away. In Quebec the first Government was formed under the auspices of the Hon. P. J. O. Chauveau, who remained at its head until 1873. In Ontario the formation of the first Government was entrusted to the Hon. John Sandfield Macdonald. That gentleman had long been diverging farther and farther from the Reform party, or rather from that portion of it which acknowledged allegiance to Mr. Brown. He regarded the disorganization of the party as being wholly due to Mr. Brown's ascendency, and to this impression his subsequent course is largely attributable. He had vehemently opposed the scheme of Confederation until it had been finally matured, but, being to a large extent a man of expediency, he had given in his adhesion when all



THE HON. SIR CHARLES TUPPER.

the work had been done, and when further opposition could serve no purpose. He then began to coöperate with Sir John A. Macdonald, and no one was surprised when it became known that he had been entrusted with the formation of the Ontario Government. He succeeded in forming a strong coalition Ministry, which inaugurated a rigid system of economy, and remained in power for more than four years.

Two events which occurred during the short interval that elapsed between the elections and the meeting of the first session of the First Dominion Parliament are deserving of mention. On the 4th of November Mr. Galt resigned his portfolio of Minister of Finance, together with his seat in the Ministry. The reasons alleged by him for his resignation were: first, the necessity of attending to his private affairs; and, second, a series of attacks made upon his fiscal policy. It was alleged by the Opposition press that the effect of the Currency Act, which had been introduced and passed under his auspices during the last session of the old Parliament of Canada, had been to unduly favour the Bank of Montreal at the expense of other banks throughout the country. The failure of the Commercial Bank, which had just occurred, was said to be largely due to this cause, and there can be no doubt that the charge was well founded. Mr. Galt felt the aspersions upon him, and it is not improbable that they may have had something to do with his resignation, but there seems good reason for believing that the harmony between him and other members of the Government had been to some extent interrupted. The other circumstance referred to as worthy of note was the appointment of the Hon. J. E. Cauchon as Speaker of the Senate. As has been seen, Mr. Cauchon had rendered essential service to the cause of Confederation in his native Province, and had fully earned the goodwill of the Administration, but the appointment was not received with much enthusiasm, as the recipient's aggressive character had raised up for him many enemies,

and it was moreover felt that some of the older members of the Senate had a prior claim. Mr. Cauchon's discharge of the duties pertaining to his office, however, are on all hands admitted to have been eminently dignified, and in every sense creditable to him.

The issues of the past having been wiped out, the new Government began its reign, as it was said, "with a clean slate." There were no strictly party questions to be discussed, and though it was inevitable that a legitimate Opposition must sooner or later arise, there was for the time nothing to interfere with the seasonable reduction to practice of the new constitution. The construction of the Intercolonial Railway, the extension of the Union to the North-West Territories and to all the other British North American colonies, were matters as to which there was little divergence of opinion. The one serious difficulty that presented itself was the hostile attitude of Nova Scotia. Such was the aspect of affairs when Parliament met at Ottawa on the 7th of November.

The *personnel* of this First Parliament under Confederation affords ample materials for an interesting series of pen-and-ink sketches of distinguished public men. The space within which the present work must be restricted unfortunately prevents this from being done with any approach to completeness, or even to comprehensiveness of detail. The members from the Maritime Provinces were of course all new to Canadian public life, and there was a large infusion of new blood from the old Provinces of Canada. A few old acquaintances—Mr. Brown among the number—were conspicuous by reason of their absence; but, in addition to the gentlemen composing the Ministry, Messieurs A. A. Dorion, L. H. Holton, J. S. Macdonald,* Alexander Mackenzie, P. J. O. Chauveau,* H. G.

* Dual representation was then permitted, and the fact that these gentlemen were at the head of their respective Provincial Governments, and had seats in their respective Provincial Legislatures, did not disqualify them from sitting in the House of Commons. Many conspicuous persons in Ontario and Quebec held seats in both the Dominion and Provincial Parliaments. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick dual representation was prohibited by local legislation.

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SIR ALBERT J. SMITH.

Joly, L. S. Huntington, John Carling, John Rose, J. C. Blanchet, Alexander Morris, and J. J. C. Abbott still swelled the Parliamentary ranks. Conspicuous among the representatives from the Maritime Provinces were Joseph Howe, a statesman of profound and capacious intellect, who, under favourable auspices, might have taken rank among the foremost orators of his time; Dr. Tupper, Mr. Howe's most redoubtable opponent in Nova Scotia, a man of vigorous understanding, who, without being a great orator, is an apt, a voluble, and withal an earnest and effective speaker both in and out of Parliament; Albert James Smith, an able lawyer of New Brunswick, who had recently declined the post of Chief Justice of that Province; Charles Fisher, who had for many years fought side by side with Lemuel Allan Wilmot in the struggle for Responsible Government in New Brunswick; and Timothy Warren Anglin, at that time known only as one of the foremost journalists in the Maritime Provinces, but since recognized as an exceedingly powerful debater, possessing a comprehensive knowledge of Canadian affairs. Ontario and Quebec also returned several new members of exceptional ability, by far the most noteworthy of whom was Edward Blake, the eldest son of the distinguished man who has already figured prominently in this narrative.* Up to a short time prior to Confederation, Mr. Blake had taken no part in public affairs. He was the acknowledged head of the Equity bar in Upper Canada, and his attention had been entirely bestowed upon his profession. He was induced to embark in political life in consequence of urgent overtures from the leaders of the Reform party, which was much disorganized, and in need of capable men to direct its policy. Having responded favourably to these overtures, he was at the general elections of 1867 returned to both Legislatures, West Durham electing him to the House of Commons and South Bruce to the Ontario Assembly. His attendance

* *Ante*, pp. 107-110, 141, 142, 151-153, 161, 162, etc.

in the House of Commons was for some time not very assiduous, his chosen work lying chiefly in the local Legislature; but the significance of his entry into political life was recognized throughout the Dominion, and the party to which he belonged—more especially the younger and more enthusiastic portion of it—anticipated great things therefrom. If an unprejudiced mind cannot declare that all the sanguine predictions of 1867 have been fulfilled, it is at all events certain that Mr. Blake's presence in public life has had the effect of broadening and elevating the Canadian politics of his time. As a constitutional lawyer he probably has no rival among his contemporaries. His profound legal knowledge and acumen, his large mental grasp and power of expression, his rigid integrity and purity of purpose, his aspirations towards a higher and better morality than is currently supposed to prevail in the conduct of public affairs, are doubted neither by friends nor foes. His defects as a public man are easily pointed out. Among them may be enumerated a hyper-sensitiveness which renders him peculiarly susceptible to the petty irritations that necessarily beset the leader of a somewhat divided and incongruous political party. He is moreover imbued with a degree of caution almost amounting to timidity in dealing with questions upon which public opinion has not been clearly pronounced; and his demeanour is marked by a want of that *savoir faire* which is absolutely essential to the achievement of wide personal popularity. A less sincere and earnest man, possessing greater power of tact and conciliation, would unquestionably have a more united following than Mr. Blake can rally to his side. But examples are not wanting where earnestness and sincerity in politics have gone hand and hand not only with lofty statesmanship and great powers of mind, but with a warm-hearted geniality which attracts to its side instead of chilling into antipathy or indifference. There are scores of earnest and able young men in Canada who would willingly range themselves under Mr. Blake's leadership, were it not that they are repelled by a manner as devoid

TORONTO ENGRAVING CO

THE HON. EDWARD BLAKE.

of warmth as is a flake of December snow, and as devoid of magnetism as is a loaf of unleavened bread.

Immediately upon the assembling of Parliament the Hon. James Cockburn was elected by acclamation to the Speakership of the House of Commons, and on the following day—the 8th—the session was formally opened by the Governor-General. The Speech congratulated the Houses on the accomplishment of Confederation, and foreshadowed many important legislative measures which were to be introduced during the session. The Address in Reply gave rise to a discussion in the Commons which lasted several days, in the course of which Mr. Howe gave utterance to the grounds of Nova Scotia's dissatisfaction with Confederation. A speech by Mr. Howe on an important public question was certain to be eloquent and forcible, but it is doubtful whether he on this occasion spoke from mature conviction, and he certainly did not appear at his best. He was replied to by Dr. Tupper, who pointed out various inconsistencies in the stand taken by the anti-Unionists of Nova Scotia, and denied that the issue of Confederation had been fairly put before the people of that Province. The Address was finally carried without a division, and the attention of members was thenceforward directed to the legislation of the session, which included a number of statutes of great practical utility. Prominent among them was a measure which established reduced rates of postage and inaugurated the Post Office Savings Bank system in Canada. An endeavour to place the telegraph system of the Dominion under the control of the Government, as had previously been done in Great Britain, was not successful, it being considered that the existing system was adequate to the public needs. An Act to provide for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway was among the most important measures of the session, the route being left to be settled by the Imperial authorities, in accordance with the terms upon which the guarantee of three millions had been granted.* An amendment moved by Mr.

* *Ante*, p. 467.

Dorion to the effect that the route should not be determined on without the consent of Parliament was defeated by 83 to 35, which vote was a conclusive proof of the power of the Government. That power there was no apparent intention of abusing. The public business was carried on with judgment, and the discussions were conducted with moderation. The Opposition, though not fully organized, had begun to assimilate their materials. In their ranks were many able men who went far to supply the place of numbers; but there were no barbarous onslaughts, nor any displays of factious bitterness. It may be said, in a word, that the tone of Parliament had perceptibly improved. Even the discontented members from Nova Scotia treated questions, as they arose, on their merits, and showed no disposition to monopolize the debates by long discourses on the injustice to which their Province had, as they believed, been subjected. The old obstructive policy was for the time numbered among the things of the past, and Parliament seemed to be actuated by an honest desire to test the working qualities of our new constitution.

The portfolio of Minister of Finance, which had recently been vacated by Mr. Galt, was accepted by the Hon. John Rose during the month of November, while Parliament was in session. Mr. Rose was reëlected by acclamation for his constituency of Huntingdon. He devoted himself assiduously to the duties of his department, which had become more complicated and onerous in consequence of the admission of the two Maritime Provinces. On the 4th of December a series of resolutions, based on the 146th section of the Confederation Act, were introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. McDougall, with a view to bringing Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory under the control of the Dominion Government. A week later these resolutions were adopted, and in due course an address embodying them was forwarded to Her Majesty. On the 21st of December Parliament adjourned for a long recess, in

order that the local Legislatures might complete their sessions during the interval. The only other notable political event which marked the close of the year 1867 was the death of Mr. Fergusson-Blair, President of the Privy Council, which occurred at Ottawa on the 29th of December.

During the recess Mr. Howe applied himself with characteristic vigour and resolution to the extension and consolidation of the agitation in his native Province for the repeal of the Union. The local Legislature met on the 30th of January, 1868, and had not been long in session ere an address to the Queen was passed, praying for a repeal of "so much of the Act for the Union of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as relates to Nova Scotia." Four delegates, one of whom was Mr. Howe, were sent to England to lay the address at the foot of the throne, and generally to urge the matter of repeal upon the Imperial authorities. The Canadian Government deemed it advisable to send over a representative to counteract these efforts, and selected Dr. Tupper for the purpose. The Doctor proceeded to England, and bestirred himself vigorously to refute the arguments of the Nova Scotian delegates. The mission of the latter was doomed to failure, and after considerable delay they returned therefrom with their minds partly made up to accept the inevitable.

Meanwhile the Dominion Parliament re-assembled on the 12th of March, 1868. The Government were subjected to some adverse criticism on the part of the Nova Scotian members for having sent Dr. Tupper to England to oppose Mr. Howe and his co-delegates. The discussion on the subject, however, came to nothing, and even before it was ended the sessional legislation began to be actively pushed forward. A number of important practical measures came before the House of Commons, and were in a fair way to become law when an event occurred which for a time suspended all efforts at legislation, and sent a thrill of horror through the land.

During the early weeks of this adjourned session no representative attracted a greater share of attention on the part of his fellow-members than Thomas D'Arcy McGee. Reference has been made in former pages* to the beneficial influence exerted over him by his altered surroundings. His mind had steadily developed, and he had become not only a loyal subject of his Queen, but an ardent enthusiast on the subject of Canadian nationality. He had learned to look back with shame and disgust upon much of his past life, and had long since cut himself adrift from associations which had once been dear to his heart. No man had done so much to place Fenianism in its proper light before his fellow-countrymen in Canada. No man had felt and expressed more abhorrence at the Fenian invasions to which our country had been subjected. As an inevitable result he had lost popularity among the Irishmen of Montreal, many of whom were adherents of "the Brotherhood." At the last general election he had narrowly escaped defeat in Montreal West, a constituency where he had once been all-powerful. He had soon afterwards been struck down by a serious illness, from which he had barely recovered when the session opened in November. He had been brought very near to death's door, and had for the first time realized the frail tenure by which even a strong man holds his life. His convalescence was marked by great changes, mental as well as physical. Though still genial and good-humoured, it was noted that he seemed to be pervaded by a serious earnestness that at times bordered upon gloom. The old rollicking tone seemed to have entirely departed from him, and there was an entire change in his personal habits. He had formerly been addicted to drink. He was now rigidly abstemious. His conversation had once been impetuous, often reckless, and more or less interlarded with expletives. It was now staid, decorous, and thoughtful. Much of his time every day

* *Ante*, pp. 361–363.

was devoted to the offices of religion. Those who knew him most intimately declared their belief that the change in him was permanent, and not merely the result of serious physical prostration. It was afterwards remarked that his impending doom had cast its shadow upon him.

Ever since the last election, and indeed for some weeks before it, he had been subjected to periodical inflictions in the shape of anonymous letters. Some of these came from Ireland, others from the United States, and others from Canada. Their tenor varied somewhat, but most of them harped to the same tune. They denounced him as a renegade and a time-server, and ended by threatening his life for having abandoned his old friends. These missives were not without effect, for though Mr. McGee tried to regard them with indifference, he knew that he was a marked man, and he resolved that he would erelong retire from public life. Meanwhile he applied himself assiduously to his duties, and took a prominent part in some of the debates. On the evening of the 6th of April he made a brilliant and statesmanlike speech, in which he counselled the adoption of a pacific and conciliatory policy in dealing with Nova Scotia. The House adjourned about two o'clock on the following morning, and a few minutes afterwards Mr. McGee started for his boarding-house on Sparks Street, accompanied by several other persons whose course lay in the same direction. On the corner of Sparks and Metcalfe Streets the others parted from him, and pursued their several ways homeward. The doomed man proceeded to his boarding-house, and had actually inserted his latch-key in the door when a pistol bullet, fired by an unseen hand, crashed through his brain. Death was necessarily instantaneous. In a few moments a crowd had collected on the spot, but no traces of the assassin could be found.

A general burst of indignation was evoked when the wires flashed the news to all points of the compass. Mr. McGee had become popular in his adopted country, and for some time there had been a general

belief that he was entering upon the noblest and most productive epoch of his career. He had not quite completed his forty-third year, and had seemed to have "a wealth of days" before him. Out of respect to the dead man's memory Parliament adjourned until after the funeral, which took place at Montreal, at the public expense, on the 13th. A pension of £300 a year was voted to his widow, and provision was also made for the support of his children. The Dominion Government offered a large reward for the arrest of the murderer, and the Quebec Government and the City of Ottawa pursued a similar course. Erelong a Fenian named Patrick James Whelan was apprehended, tried, and found guilty. He was probably only one out of a number of miscreants who conspired to commit the murder, but the whole truth respecting the dark affair has never been disclosed. Whelan was hanged at Ottawa on the 11th of February, 1869.*

Parliament reassembled on the 14th of April (1868)—the day after the funeral—and thenceforward remained in session until the 22nd of May. Among the important measures adopted were Acts establishing and regulating the management of various offices of State. New Customs and Militia Acts were passed, and also a new Act to secure the independence of Parliament. By the last-named measure any person holding a position of profit or emolument under Government is declared ineligible for a seat in Parliament, and any person sitting or voting under such circumstances is rendered liable to a fine of $2,000 per day. A similar disqualification is extended to all contractors with any of the departments. The Customs Act was merely a further carrying out of the purpose of the Act of 1866.†

* This was the last public execution that has taken place in Canada. During the session of 1869 an Act was passed providing that executions of sentences imposing the extreme penalty of the law shall take place within the prison walls, and that no one shall be present thereat except necessary officers and such other persons as may be admitted by special order of the Sheriff.

† *See* Maclean's Tariff Hand Book, p. 12

In July Mr. Howland received the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and forthwith entered upon his duties. At the same time the Hon. Lemuel Allan Wilmot, a veteran politician and jurist of New Brunswick, became Lieutenant-Governor of that Province. Throughout the summer the Nova Scotia question was the absorbing topic of interest. In August Sir John Macdonald and several other members of the Government attended a convention held at Halifax, at which an attempt was made to reconcile the discontented Nova Scotians to their lot. The attempt was for the time unsuccessful, but the seed of success was sown in the course of the following autumn, when approaches were made to Mr. Howe to induce him to bend to the imperative necessities of the situation. The petition for repeal had been rejected by the Imperial authorities and further opposition was hopeless. A revision of the terms upon which Nova Scotia had agreed to enter the Union was now suggested, and promises were made that a more liberal arrangement would be assented to on behalf of the Dominion. A place in the Government was offered to Mr. Howe himself. That gentleman had no choice but either to receive with favour the very liberal advances made to him, or to withdraw altogether from public life. After taking time for mature deliberation he resolved to adopt the former alternative. But before he had arrived at this conclusion certain other events took place which must be briefly recorded.

In order that Confederation might be inaugurated under Lord Monck's auspices, his original term of office as Governor-General of Canada had been extended for two years. That period had now expired, and on the 14th of November he bade farewell to our shores. During his term of office he had been created a peer of the United Kingdom, by the title of Baron Monck of Ballytrammon, in the county of Wexford. His subsequent career calls for no special remark in these pages. Sir John Young, his successor, reached Canada towards the end of November, and was sworn in, first as

Administrator, and sometime afterwards as Governor-General of the Dominion. Sir John—better known to us by his later title of Lord Lisgar—was the eldest son of an Irish baronet, whom he succeeded in 1848. He was a Conservative in politics, and had represented the county of Cavan in the Imperial House of Commons for many years, during which he had held various ministerial offices. He had for some time administered the government of the Ionian Islands, and had afterwards spent six years as Governor of the colony of New South Wales. He had thus enjoyed ample experience, and had received a thorough official training, though, having now entered upon his sixty-second year, he was somewhat advanced in life to enter upon a new sphere of duty.

The acquisition of the North-West still engrossed considerable attention, though it was to a great degree overshadowed by the agitation on the subject of Nova Scotia's discontent. Before the close of the year Sir George Cartier and Mr. McDougall were appointed a deputation to proceed to England to make definite arrangements as to the terms of transfer by the Hudson's Bay Company. They departed on their mission, and were absent several months. In January of the new year (1869) Mr. Howe entered the Government, and accepted the office of President of the Council, which had been rendered vacant by the death of Mr. Fergusson-Blair more than a year before. This proceeding was disastrous to Mr. Howe's reputation. For the first time in the course of a long and stormy political career he was accused of having sold himself and his principles to the highest bidder. The Reformers of Nova Scotia refused to endorse his action, and when he returned to his constituents for reëlection he found himself deserted by his old friends, many of whom entered with spirit into the campaign against him. Dr. Tupper, who had been his bitterest foe, rallied the Conservatives to his assistance, and it was to Conservative votes that he was chiefly indebted for his return. The obloquy that was heaped upon him

did much to break his spirit, and to destroy his usefulness to the Government which he had joined. His popularity was gone, and he was much shattered in health. Inconsistent as his conduct undoubtedly was, there is no difficulty in finding various grounds of justification for it. He had struggled hard and conscientiously to obtain repeal. His struggle had been ineffectual, and nothing was to be gained by prolonging it. On the contrary, by surrendering himself to the inevitable he could undoubtedly gain many advantages for his native Province. This is precisely what he did, and if he erred—a matter as to which there is at least room for argument—he erred from want of judgment, and not from personal venality. His services to his native Province in times past had been such as might well have induced his compatriots in Nova Scotia to look with a tender and forgiving eye, even upon much graver errors than any which he had been proved to have committed.

The "better terms" granted to Nova Scotia were embodied in an Order in Council, passed on the 25th of January. In addition to some lesser concessions, the amount of the Provincial debt assumed by the Dominion was increased from the original $8,000,000 to $9,186,756, and an annual subsidy of $82,698 was granted to the Province for a term of ten years, to be computed from the birthday of the Dominion. During the ensuing session these terms were embodied in an Act of Parliament, and from that time forward Nova Scotia's active opposition to Confederation ceased. Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island still remained out of the Union. During the month of March resolutions in favour of entering the Dominion were passed by both branches of the local Legislature of Newfoundland, and immediately afterwards delegates proceeded to Ottawa to arrange the terms. The negotiations gave rise to little difficulty, but at the ensuing elections the people of the colony declared against the project, which to this day remains in abeyance. As will hereafter be seen, Prince Edward Island eventually overcame

her reluctance to enter Confederation; but for the time she, like Newfoundland, refused to lend a favourable ear to the voice of the charmer.

The second session of the First Dominion Parliament met on the 15th of April. The strength of the Administration was unimpaired, and the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne was carried in both Houses on the following day. The most important debate of the session arose out of an amendment by Mr. Blake to the official resolutions moved by Mr. Howe, in the House of Commons, on the subject of confirming the "better terms" granted to Nova Scotia. Mr. Blake disputed the constitutionality of the grant, arguing that the British North America Act had settled the basis of Union, and that the Canadian Parliament had no power to change it. He was ably supported by Mr. Mackenzie, who seconded the motion, and delivered a carefully-considered argument to the same purport. The motion was opposed by many of the ablest speakers in the House; conspicuously by Mr. John Hillyard Cameron and Dr. Tupper. Owing to the great majority at the command of the Government, there was no possibility of success for such a hostile motion as this, and it was defeated by a vote of 96 to 57; but the course of the discussion proved that the Opposition, if numerically weak, were strong in debating power, and had attained to a more advanced stage of organization than had been supposed. Mr. Howe's resolutions were finally carried, and a Bill founded upon them, confirming the grant to Nova Scotia, was passed as already recorded. Important legislation was also enacted affecting the North-West. Sir George Cartier and Mr. McDougall had concluded their negotiations in England, and arrangements had been made for the surrender of the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company. The conditions of surrender were that the Company should receive from the Dominion Government the sum of £300,000 sterling, and that all rights of the Company, with certain specific reservations, should enure to the

Imperial Government, by whom the same were to be transferred to the Dominion within one month thereafter. The reservations included certain lands, amounting in all to about 50,000 acres, contiguous to the trading posts of the Company, in addition to one-twentieth of all the land in the great fertile belt south of the north branch of the Saskatchewan. It was expressly agreed that the rights of the Indians and Half-breeds of the territory were to be respected, and the 1st of October following was fixed as the date of transfer. Such being the terms agreed upon, they now received the sanction of the Dominion Parliament, which passed an Act providing a Territorial Government for the country soon to be acquired. The immense tract was designated by the general name of "the North-West Territories," and it was enacted that the affairs thereof should be administered by a Lieutenant-Governor to be appointed by the Governor-General in Council. Provision was made for the appointment of a Council to assist in carrying on the administration. All laws then in force in the territories, and not inconsistent with the British North America Act or the terms of admission, were to remain in force until amended or repealed. The Supply Bill provided for the borrowing by the Dominion Government, under Imperial guarantee, of the sum necessary to complete the purchase; and provision was also made for an unguaranteed loan of such sums as might be needed for surveys and other public improvements. The Territorial Government, it will be understood, was a mere temporary expedient, and the intention was that a regular Provincial Government, similar to that of the other Provinces, should be established at as early a date as possible.

The other Acts of the session were not historically significant. The prorogation took place on the 23rd of June. With a view to advancing matters in the North-West, Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis, whose acquaintance we have already made in connection with the Fenian Raid of 1866, was despatched to Red River during the

summer, to set on foot a system of public surveys. The arrival of Prince Arthur in Canada in August, his subsequent tour through the country, and the multiform festivities in his honour, were the chief topics of interest during the late summer and early autumn. In October, Mr. Rose, having resolved to take up his abode in London, England, as member of a well-known banking firm, resigned his portfolio of Minister of Finance. His successor was a gentleman of whom we have lost sight for some time past. When we parted from Mr. Hincks* he had left Canada to fill the important office of Governor of Barbadoes and the Windward Islands. After administering the Government there for six years he had been promoted to the Government of British Guiana, where he had remained until the year at which the history has now arrived (1869), when he retired upon a pension, and was created a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George. After a brief sojourn in England he returned, as Sir Francis Hincks, to the land where his earliest political fame had been gathered. The financial ability which he had displayed in the old days when he held the Inspector-Generalship were not forgotten, and he had been in Canada only two or three months when Mr. Rose's resignation led to his receiving from Sir John Macdonald the offer of a seat in the Government as Minister of Finance. He accepted the offer, and was returned to the House of Commons as member for North Renfrew. Various other ministerial readjustments took place before the close of the year, Mr. Dunkin becoming Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Alexander Morris becoming Minister of Inland Revenue, and Mr. James Cox Aikins Secretary of State for Canada and Registrar-General. Mr. Howe became Secretary of State for the Provinces. Mr. McDougall, having received the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, ceased to be a member of the Administration, which, after all readjustments had been made,

* *Ante*, p. 324.

no longer partook very strongly of the nature of a coalition. As has been remarked by a contemporary writer, "Coalition had served its purpose, and there were now enough questions of great national importance arising on which to divide two great parties, so that from this time forward we see Sir John abandoning the idea of having 'all shades of political opinion' represented in his Cabinet, and recruiting his strength from the ranks of his own party."*

Mr. McDougall's appointment to the Lieutenant-Governorship above mentioned was generally regarded as a fitting reward for his public services in bringing about the acquisition of the North-West by the Dominion. It was to take effect after the formal transfer of the territory to Canada, which proposed transfer, owing to a temporary difficulty with reference to the payment of the purchase money, had been postponed for two months, and was not to take place until the 1st of December. It would seem that the arrangements were conducted with extraordinary want of judgment, and that the troubles which subsequently arose were materially increased, if indeed they were not altogether brought about thereby. Mr. McDougall set out for Fort Garry, the seat of his proposed Government, in October. It was his intention to proceed directly to his destination, and to place himself, upon his arrival, in communication with Mr. William McTavish, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Before starting on his journey he received certain ominous warnings from Colonel Dennis, who, as just intimated, had been sent on in advance to make surveys. The inhabitants of the country were chiefly made up of French Canadian half-breeds, descendants of the *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* who had formerly been the only white explorers of that wild region. They had made some progress in husbandry, and had brought under cultivation considerable tracts of the more fertile portions of the territory. They were of the Roman Catholic faith, and had a

* See Tuttle's *History of Canada*, Vol. II., p. 87.

resident bishop in the person of the Right Reverend Alexandre Antonin Taché, a nephew of the late Sir E. P. Taché, who has figured conspicuously in the present narrative. The seat of the bishopric was at St. Boniface, on the opposite side of Red River from Fort Garry, and barely half a mile distant therefrom. Bishop Taché's influence over his flock was naturally very great, but unfortunately he was at this time absent from his diocese, attending the sitting of the Œcumenical Council at Rome. Colonel Dennis had not been long in the country before he observed manifestations of an uneasy, suspicious feeling on the part of the inhabitants. The French half-breeds were solicitous lest their title to their lands should be disputed by the Dominion Government, and were unwilling that any present surveys should be proceeded with. They considered that they ought to have been consulted as to the proposed changes, instead of being transferred from one owner to another, as it appeared to them, like so much merchandise. Their displeasure was in no small degree intensified by the injudicious and intemperate language of some of the Canadian settlers, who irritated them in various ways, and filled their minds with forebodings of evil. These circumstances were carefully noted by Colonel Dennis, and communicated by letter to Mr. McDougall. He also drew attention to the necessity of effecting the extinction of the Indian title. Mr. McDougall does not seem to have attached much importance to these representations. Having proceeded by way of St. Paul, Minnesota, he reached Pembina on the 30th of October, accompanied by his family, and by several gentlemen who were intended to be members of his Council. The party were provided with three hundred rifles and a stock of ammunition. While on the way from St. Paul they had heard rumours of increasing disaffection at Red River, but they had pushed on, not dreaming that they would have to encounter armed insurrection. At Pembina, however, they began to realize the situation when Mr. McDougall was served by a half-breed with a written notice, professing to emanate from a

"National Committee," and forbidding him to enter the territory. The Lieutenant-Governor was not to be deterred by such means, and proceeded to enter upon his domain. He had no sooner reached the Hudson's Bay Company's post, about two miles from the frontier, than he received grave intelligence from Colonel Dennis, from which it appeared that the operations of the surveyors had been interfered with, and that the French half-breeds had held a meeting at which it had been formally resolved that Mr. McDougall should not be permitted to enter the territory. The insurgents had placed themselves under the guidance of one of their number whose name was Louis Riel, an impetuous young man of weak and immature judgment, who doubtless believed that he was acting in the best interests of his compatriots. By his directions, armed parties had been despatched to various points along the route between Fort Garry and Pembina, and were now posted there with the avowed purpose of resisting Mr. McDougall's progress. Several of the Hudson's Bay Company's authorities had remonstrated in vain, and the Roman Catholic priest in charge of the diocese during Bishop Taché's absence declined to interfere. As for the Scotch and English half-breeds, they were negatively loyal and well-disposed, but the prevalent sentiment among them was that they had been treated with insufficient consideration, and very few of them were inclined to go so far as to take up arms against the French party. "We think," said they, "that the Dominion should assume the responsibility of establishing among us what it, and it alone, has decided on." The only residents who could be depended upon to support Mr. McDougall with energy and zeal were the little handful of Canadian settlers, who were too few in number to effectively oppose the force at Riel's command.

Mr. McDougall was thus placed in an extraordinary predicament. He had no sufficient force at his command to enable him to fight his way to Fort Garry, even if such a line of action would have been

advisable. He resolved to remain, for the time, where he was. Meanwhile he forwarded a statement of the facts to the authorities at Ottawa. Having determined to communicate with Governor McTavish at Fort Garry, he despatched an emissary thither, but the latter had only proceeded a few miles when his course was stopped by a barricade manned by armed men, who informed him that neither Mr. McDougall nor any member of his party would be allowed to advance any farther. The envoy was sent back under an escort, and warned not to repeat his attempt. On the 2nd of November a party of fourteen armed horsemen called at Mr. McDougall's headquarters, and demanded an interview with him. Their demand being complied with, they notified him that he must leave the territory before nine o'clock next morning. Mr. McDougall endeavoured to place the real state of affairs before them, and after a time they retired; but early next morning they again presented themselves, and made such demonstrations that Mr. McDougall and his party promptly retired across the boundary-line, and took refuge in the United States.

Within the territory matters had already assumed the shape of active rebellion. A "Provisional Government" had been formed under the nominal presidency of a Mr. John Bruce, but the secretary, Riel, assumed the chief direction of affairs, and erelong became President in name as well as in fact. On the 24th of November the insurgents, having mustered in considerable force, took possession of Fort Garry and its armaments, and set Governor McTavish's authority at defiance. As the days passed by they became more and more aggressive. The Canadian population were placed under surveillance, and about fifty of them, who had assembled at the house of a prominent resident named Dr. Schultz, were besieged and compelled to surrender, whereupon they were marched to Fort Garry and placed in durance. Governor McTavish, who was mortally ill, was subjected to various indignities, and the stores of the

Company, as well as those of various loyal subjects, were pillaged. All was confusion and alarm, and the future looked exceedingly ominous to the prisoners confined within the fort.

As previously mentioned, the 1st of December had been the date fixed upon for the transfer of the territory from the Imperial Government to Canada. Owing to the disturbed aspect of affairs, no peaceful transfer was possible at that time, and the Dominion Government were not disposed to accept the territory in a state of insurrection. Mr. McDougall, acting on the erroneous impression that the transfer had been duly effected, issued a proclamation on the 1st of December, commanding the insurgents to peaceably disperse and return to their homes, and threatening the penalties of the law in case of disobedience. He also issued a commission authorizing Colonel Dennis to raise a force and put down the insurrection. No respect was paid to the proclamation, which produced no other effect than to make Riel commit more flagrant excesses than before. Colonel Dennis was unable to accomplish anything by virtue of his commission, and abandoned the territory in despair. Mr. McDougall, finding that he had made a false move, returned to Ontario, much embittered against the Government for having placed him in such a position. He believed the rebellion to have been connived at, and to some extent fomented, by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Roman Catholic priesthood of Red River, as well as by his late colleague, Mr. Howe, who had visited the territory a short time before. He published a series of letters giving currency to his views, and disclosing many facts which seemed to afford no inconsiderable foundation for them. The truth appears to be that some of the Hudson's Bay Company's officials at Fort Garry had from the first looked with disfavour upon the project of transferring to the Dominion a territory whereof they had come to regard themselves as lords paramount. They were powerless to prevent the transfer, but did not feel called upon to promote it, and were not sorry that

it should be attended with more or less embarrassment to the new proprietors. This, so far as can now be judged, is the extent to which the resident officers of the Company were tainted with complicity in the Red River Rebellion. They paid the penalty of their unwise conduct by seeing "a despotic ruler established for nine months in their own fort, feeding his men on the Company's provisions, and paying them with the Company's money."* As regards the complicity of some of the Roman Catholic clergy of Red River there is unfortunately no room for doubt. It must also be admitted that a very strong sentiment of sympathy with the insurgents prevailed among the French population of the Province of Quebec, and that this sympathy was powerfully reflected in the Dominion Cabinet, although there is no evidence that Mr. Howe was influenced by it, as suggested by Mr. McDougall. As for Mr. McDougall himself, he was profoundly disgusted with the aspect of affairs. All thoughts of his return to the North-West were abandoned, and he soon afterwards received from the Premier of Ontario the appointment of Government Trustee of the Canada Southern Railway Municipal Bonds, in addition to that of a Commissioner to ascertain the western and northern boundaries of that Province.

No need to follow in detail the progress of the insurrection. Riel conducted himself as an absolute dictator, and no one could effectually gainsay him. He confiscated public and private property at will, and arrested or banished those whom his fear or caprice led him to dislike. Fort Garry was full of loyal British subjects, who were treated as "political prisoners," and kept in close confinement. Dr. Schultz, after being imprisoned about three weeks, effected his escape, and, in conjunction with other Canadians in the settlement, soon succeeded in organizing a considerable force for the release of the captives in Fort Garry. Fortunately it did not become necessary to resort to the strong arm

* *The Red River Expedition*, by Captain G. L. Huyshe ; p. 9.

to accomplish this object. An imperative demand was made that the prisoners should be set at liberty, and the rebel commander, seeing the force arrayed against him, and being further influenced by prominent residents, yielded to the pressure brought to bear upon him. The prisoners were released, but Riel expressed his determination to recapture Dr. Schultz, to whom he was especially inimical. The Doctor, however, made his escape to Ontario, and thereby doubtless escaped a tragical fate. Vicar-General Thibault, Colonel De Salaberry, and Mr. Donald A. Smith, Chief Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company at Montreal, had meanwhile been sent up as Special Commissioners to inquire into the causes of the insurrection, and to explain to the people the intentions of the Canadian Government. They accomplished little in the way of restoring order, but Mr. Smith's urgent representations were the means of saving the life of Major Boulton, a Canadian officer of militia, who had been captured at the head of a little force of loyalists.

Power is dangerous in the hands of a fool. Riel's head, what little there was of it, was completely turned by the "high degree" to which he had attained. Finding that nobody disputed his will, he seems to have become downright intoxicated by his position, and as the winter passed by the hereditary savage in his nature asserted himself more and more strongly. In the early days of spring he committed what has justly been designated "the dark crime of the rebellion:" a crime which was the means of arousing public opinion in Ontario to the necessity of putting down the insurrection at any cost, and without avoidable delay.

Among the Canadians besieged in Dr. Schultz's house on the occasion above referred to was a young man named Thomas Scott, a former resident of Ontario. He was not among those who surrendered to Riel, but he was arrested during the same evening and lodged in Fort Garry. He subsequently made his escape, but was one of the party which had more recently been captured with Major Boulton. Poor Scott was a somewhat turbulent youth, enthusiastically loyal,

but rash and imprudent in his language. He was a firebrand among the prisoners, and scouted Riel's authority. This was in itself sufficient to account for the latter's animosity towards him, but it is said that Riel also bore him a personal grudge. On the evening of the 3rd of March, 1870, he was tried by a court martial improvised by Riel within the walls of the fort. The offences charged against him were that he had taken up arms against the Provisional Government, and that he had struck one of the officials. The so-called court martial was the veriest farce, Riel appearing in the threefold capacity of prosecutor, witness, and judge. The prisoner was not permitted to offer any defence, but was sentenced to be shot at ten o'clock on the following morning. He did not at first realize his position. It doubtless seemed to him utterly incredible that his life should be sacrificed on such pretences. Shocking to relate, the sentence of this mock tribunal was carried out. A little after noon on the 4th the prisoner was led out through the chief entrance to the fort, to a spot a few yards from the walls. His arms were then pinioned, and he was ordered to kneel, which he had no sooner done than he was fired upon by a party of six insurgents, under the direction of "Adjutant-General" Ambrose Lépine. Several of the bullets pierced his body, but he was not killed. One of the firing party, observing this, stepped up to where he lay, and discharged a revolver at his head. The body was then hurriedly thrust into a rude coffin and conveyed within the fort. It is said that a human voice was distinctly heard to issue from the coffin after the adjustment of the lid. The subsequent fate of the body has been made the subject of various sensational but unauthenticated stories. Riel refused to deliver it to the Bishop of Rupert's Land and a Wesleyan minister who applied for it with a view to giving it Christian burial. A box alleged to contain the body was burned in the courtyard of the fort, but it was subsequently ascertained that this box contained nothing but stones. The general belief is that the corpse was thrust

below the ice in Red River. The truth has never come to light, and is likely to remain an unsolved mystery.

Some weeks before this time the Government had taken measures which they hoped would be the means of bringing about a peaceful solution of the Red River difficulty. As already mentioned, Bishop Taché, whose ecclesiastical position and long residence in the North-West had given him almost unbounded influence over the French half-breeds of the territory, was at Rome. Early in January the Canadian Government, recognizing the importance of securing his coöperation, caused Mr. Langevin, Minister of Public Works, to communicate with him by means of the Atlantic cable. The imperative nature of the circumstances induced the Bishop to set out promptly for Canada. He proceeded to Ottawa, where he received his instructions, and had a conference with several members of the Cabinet. He was authorized to assure the insurgents of the kindly intentions of the Government, and to offer them an amnesty for all past offences. He proceeded at once to Fort Garry, but five days before his arrival the insane folly and cruelty of the rebellion had culminated in the hideous butchery of Scott. Bishop Taché, a man of fine sensibilities, could not avoid being shocked at the terrible news that greeted him, but, according to his own account of the matter, he did not realize the fact that his instructions were affected by what had occurred. He recognized the Provisional Government, and entered into negotiations with Riel, promising complete amnesty for all offences theretofore committed. He made promises on behalf of the Canadian Government which that Government had no power to make without Imperial sanction. It is not extravagant to infer that he exceeded his authority with full knowledge of what he was doing, believing that the Canadian Government, though not bound by his promises, would feel themselves to some extent compromised thereby, and would therefore exert their influence with the Home Government to obtain a proclamation of complete amnesty. That the Right Reverend Father was instrumental in preventing further

bloodshed and in calming public opinion in the settlement must be admitted; though he was undoubtedly guilty, to say the least, of grave errors of judgment, and was in consequence subjected to much galling criticism.

When intelligence of the Scott tragedy reached Canada the public mind was stirred thereby to its inmost depths. The news of the failure of Mr. McDougall's expedition had been received with surprise, but the sentiment had been apathy itself as compared with the horror and indignation which now found expression. Public meetings were held in the principal cities and towns of Ontario, as well as in Montreal and at several other places in the Province of Quebec where there was a large Protestant population. Resolutions were passed calling upon the Government to despatch an expedition to restore authority at Red River, and to abstain from receiving certain delegates who had been sent to Ottawa by Riel. As for the delegates themselves, they were twice arrested before they could obtain an official interview with the Dominion Government, but were on both occasions discharged for lack of direct evidence. The precise result of their interview with the Government is not easy to pronounce upon. The delegates afterwards declared that a general amnesty was promised, whereas the Ministers themselves denied that any such promise was made. There is no documentary evidence to establish either one statement or the other, but it is in the highest degree improbable that the Government would commit themselves to a promise which they could only redeem after obtaining the concurrence of the Home authorities, even had they been willing to brave public opinion in Ontario, where the indignation waxed louder and louder from day to day. The public pulse had not been so stirred since the Fenian Raids of 1866. It was somewhat quieted by an official assurance that measures for maintaining Her Majesty's supremacy in the North-West would be promptly taken by the Dominion and Imperial authorities conjointly. Erelong it became known that troops were to be sent up to Fort Garry to

restore order. The Canadian Parliament had been in session ever since the 15th of February, and the reports of the debates in the House of Commons on the all-engrossing subject were read with avidity in every quarter of the Dominion. On the 2nd of May Sir John Macdonald introduced an Act to establish and provide for the Government of the Province of Manitoba. It was considerably modified in the course of its passage through Parliament, and it has since been subjected to further modifications, so that any minute account of its details would fail to convey an accurate idea of the relations at present existing between the Province and the Dominion. It may be stated in general terms that the limits of the Province were defined, and that provision was made for its representation in the Senate and the House of Commons. Local affairs were placed under the control of a Lieutenant-Governor, an Executive Council, and a Provincial Legislature consisting of a Legislative Council and Assembly. The number of members of each of these bodies and the qualification of voters for members of the Assembly were specified by the Act, and the duration of the Assembly was placed at four years. The Province having no public debt, interest at five per cent. per annum on $472,090 was allowed to it, in addition to a yearly subsidy of $30,000, and eighty cents per head on a population estimated at 17,000. Ungranted lands were vested in the Crown for Dominion purposes; and, with a view to the extinction of the Indian title, lands to the extent of 1,400,000 acres were appropriated for the benefit of resident half-breed families. The general provisions of the British North America Act were made applicable to Manitoba, which was to come into existence as a Province of Canada on the date when the Queen in Council should admit Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory into the Union. It was enacted that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, aided by a Council of eleven members, should likewise be Lieutenant-Governor of the unorganized portion of the North-West.

The next matter of importance was to restore tranquillity to the embryo Province. On the 11th of May the stipulated sum of £300,000 was paid over to the Hudson's Bay Company. Long before that date preparations had been on foot for sending a combined Imperial and Canadian military force to the scene of the rebellion. On the opening of navigation these preparations were pushed forward. The question of route was one requiring careful deliberation. It was a foregone conclusion that the troops could not be allowed to pass through the United States. The route finally determined on was that by way of Lake Superior, Thunder Bay, and across the chain of lakes to the Winnipeg River; thence down stream to Lake Winnipeg, thence across to the mouth of Red River, and thence up to Fort Garry. This route, which had formerly been in vogue among the agents of the North-West Company, had long since fallen into disuse, and grave doubts were entertained as to the feasibility of conveying a large body of troops thereby. All difficulties, however, were effectively surmounted. The expedition was placed under the command of Colonel (afterwards Sir Garnet) Wolseley, who has since won renown in West and South Africa, and more recently still on the arid plains of Egypt.* He had for some time occupied the post of Deputy Quartermaster-General to the Forces in British North America, and had already given evidences of possessing those soldierlike qualities necessary to the success of such an undertaking as the one now entrusted to him. The expeditionary force was made up of between 1,200 and 1,300 fighting men. About one-third of these were regulars of the 60th Royal Rifles. There were also small detachments of Royal Artillery and Engineers; while the rest, to the number of more than 700, were picked Canadian volunteer militia. Several weeks were spent in transporting the troops, horses and stores as far as Prince

* As these lines are passing through the press, the announcement is made that Sir Garnet Wolseley for his services in Egypt has been elevated to the peerage.

Arthur's Landing,* where the serious difficulties of the route may be said to have begun. After many harassing delays, and after undergoing no inconsiderable amount of fatigue and hardship, the main body of the expedition reached Fort Garry on the 24th of August. The secret of the approach of the troops had been well kept, and was not known at the fort until they were almost within rifle range. There was, however, no need for any hostile display, as Riel and his chief officers had taken timely flight a few minutes before, when the first intimation had reached their ears. The troops entered and took possession of the fort, hoisted the Union Jack, fired a royal salute, and gave three lusty cheers for the Queen, "which," says an eye-witness, "were caught up and heartily reëchoed by a few of the inhabitants who had followed the troops from the village."† Authority and order were reëstablished, and anarchy was at an end.

Three months before this time the Hon. Adams George Archibald, of Nova Scotia, had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the new Province, and on the 23rd of June the territory had been formally transferred to Canada. Colonel Wolseley had now arrived in advance of Mr. Archibald, but h had no civil authority, and the conduct of civil affairs devolved upon Mr. Donald A. Smith, as principal officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. That gentleman's nominal rule, however, was very brief, as Lieutenant-Governor Archibald arrived on the 2nd of September, and assumed his official functions on the 6th. Colonel Wolseley and the regulars returned to Ontario. The militia remained in Manitoba through the winter, but their active military services were not needed, as every symptom of disaffection had vanished with the flight of Riel.

In order that the story of the Red River troubles might be told

* So named by Colonel Wolseley in honour of the present Duke of Connaught. It was formerly known as "Thunder Bay,' and sometimes as "Government Landing."

† *The Red River Expedition*, by Captain G. L. Huyshe, p. 196. The "village," of course, was Winnipeg.

consecutively, the narrative of ordinary political events in Canada has been interrupted for some pages back. All that is necessary to be said, however, may be compressed into very brief space. Parliament met on the 15th of February, and remained in session until the 12th of May. The most important measure passed during the interval was the Manitoba Act already referred to. An important Banking Act, for which Sir Francis Hincks was mainly responsible, was also passed during the session. It contained numerous provisions for the protection of the public interests, and was well received by the banking and mercantile community, as well as by the country at large. An Act respecting the tariff was less popular. For some time there had been a steadily growing feeling throughout the Dominion that the country would be benefited by adopting a protective policy towards the United States. There seemed to be no probability of a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty, and the Americans thus possessed a decided advantage over us. Sir Francis Hincks, in deference to what he conceived to be the prevalent sentiment, introduced a series of resolutions which had a strong semblance of protection without much of the reality. The Opposition took exception to the proposed changes, and alleged that while they were sufficiently retaliatory to provoke ill-will in the United States, they were not sufficiently pronounced to effect any material improvement in the revenue. The Government were subjected to pressure from some of their own supporters, and made certain modifications, which however offended other supporters while wholly failing to conciliate the Opposition. They accordingly reverted to their original scheme, which was passed, but by a very small majority in both Houses. The measure tended to weaken the Government, whose strength, from this and other causes, perceptibly waned during the session. They were accused by the Opposition of laches in not having introduced various important measures which the country expected from them. There were divisions among them on several

public questions. The Premier himself was in such poor health that he was frequently unable to discharge his duties, and towards the close of the session he was prostrated by a serious illness. The Government were moreover deserted by several of their ablest supporters. The grounds of Mr. McDougall's defection have already been sufficiently indicated. That of Sir A. T. Galt was still more significant, though the precise grounds of it were not generally known beyond a very small circle. Neither of these gentlemen went so far as to formally ally themselves with the Opposition. They called themselves Independents, but it was noticeable that they almost always voted against the Government. Several readjustments of portfolios had taken place within the last few months, and the internal organization of the Cabinet seemed to be inefficient. Still, in spite of conspicuous defections and waning popularity, Ministers could command a safe majority on any important question, and they professed the utmost confidence in the future.

While the session was still in progress the Fenians in the United States were busy preparing for another demonstration against Canada. The Red River troubles afforded them an opportunity for causing annoyance, and they threatened to attack and harass Colonel Wolseley's expedition while it was proceeding on its way westward. No attempt was made to carry out this threat, but on the 25th of May an incursion was made across the Missisquoi frontier, in the Eastern Townships, by a detachment under the command of the same officer—O'Neil—who had directed the raid on the Niagara peninsula in 1866. The preparations for the movement had been notorious, and ample provision had been made in Canada to repel it. A ludicrously small force of volunteers drove the invaders back, and the leaders were arrested by the United States Marshal for Vermont. On the 27th a horde of marauders crossed the border of Huntingdon County. They were repulsed by another handful of volun-

teers, and ran away with such celerity that it seemed difficult to believe they had ever been in action before. A proclamation by General Grant, President of the United States, followed by the seizure of their arms and stores, and by the arrest of some of their leaders, completed the discomfiture of the Fenian Brotherhood, and for the time Canada suffered no further annoyance from them.

During the summer an important addition was made to the Cabinet in the person of Dr. Tupper, who accepted the Presidency of the Privy Council, and was thus brought into still more confidential relations with his sometime rival, Mr. Howe. The Hon. Edward Kenny, who had succeeded to the Presidency upon Mr. Howe's becoming Secretary of State, had in May been appointed Administrator of the Government of Nova Scotia, thus paving the way for Dr. Tupper's incumbency. The Doctor was reëlected by acclamation by his constituents in Cumberland County, and has ever since been one of the foremost men in Canadian public life on the Liberal-Conservative side. Before the close of the ensuing autumn arrangements had been completed for the final withdrawal of the Imperial troops from our shores. Canada had entered on a career of practical emancipation from Imperial control. The feeling of the authorities at home had long been that England ought to be relieved from the burden of our defence. As our only necessity for defence arose out of our connection with the mother country, we were of opinion that the latter should at least assume a share of the burden. The Imperial authorities, however, did not admit the responsibility. We were somewhat patronizingly informed that while our right to Imperial defence against foreign aggression was fully recognized, it was our duty to protect ourselves in internal affairs. When we replied that we had long been accustomed to maintain our internal peace, and that we required no assistance for that purpose—that what we desired was moral support, which would be effectually evidenced by the continuance of the Quebec garrison—we were informed that

the matter had been repeatedly and fully considered, and that the decision arrived at was not likely to be departed from.* The troops were all withdrawn in the course of the autumn, except the force permanently stationed at Halifax—which was considered as an Imperial naval and military station—and a single garrison left for the winter at Quebec, and withdrawn in the following spring.

During this period we were threatened with somewhat serious complications with the United States, arising out of the Canadian fisheries. The persistent refusal of the authorities at Washington to entertain any proposal for a renewal of reciprocity had led to a determination on the part of the Dominion Government to prevent Americans from any longer fishing in our waters. Under the Reciprocity Treaty the Americans had possessed the right of so fishing, but that treaty had been abrogated by themselves, and contrary to our often-expressed wishes. Our rights thereupon reverted to us, and the Americans thenceforward were not entitled to approach within three marine miles of our shores for fishing purposes. Our rights in this respect had been established by treaty in 1818, the only point in dispute being as to whether the three miles should be measured from the coastline or from the headlands.† American fishermen, however, continued to ply in our waters, and to take fish as they had been accustomed to do during the currency of the treaty. This they persisted in doing, in spite of repeated notifications from the Dominion Government, and even in spite of a proclamation by their own President. British and Canadian cruisers were accordingly placed on the coast, and a few trespassing vessels were seized and confiscated. The American people waxed wroth

* See the Report of the Hon. Alexander Campbell, Postmaster-General, dated 10th September, 1870.

† Americans claimed that the three-mile limit should follow the sinuosities of the coast, and that measurement across the mouths of bays should only be made when the distance from headland to headland did not exceed six miles. See "Brief on behalf of the United States," embodied in the *Record of the Proceedings of the Halifax Commission*, 1877; p. 104.

because their fellow-countrymen were not allowed to trespass with impunity, and pressure was brought to bear upon the authorities at Washington on the subject. Much ill-feeling was aroused, some portion of which found utterance in the annual message issued by President Grant during the autumn. The situation looked grave; and under such inauspicious circumstances the year 1870 drew to a close.

Early in the ensuing year it became known that the question of the fisheries, together with other important matters in dispute between Great Britain and the United States, were to be referred to a Joint Commission appointed by the Governments of the two countries. The principal causes of dispute, other than the fisheries, were the famous Alabama claims, the navigation of the St. Lawrence and the Canadian canals, and the boundary-line between the United States and British Columbia. This last question, which had been supposed to be finally settled by the Treaty of 1846,* had again become the subject of controversy, and had very nearly led to open hostilities. In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, between Canal de Haro and Rosario Strait, and near the coast of the Island of Vancouver, is an island called San Juan. The imperfect definition of the boundary, as laid down in the Oregon Treaty, led to incessant disputes as to the ownership of this island. For some time prior to 1859 it was by mutual arrangement occupied by a joint staff of British and American officials. In the summer of the year last named, General Harney, a United States military commander having authority in Washington Territory, took the extraordinary step of quartering a considerable military force there.† A season of great excitement ensued. Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Douglas, Governor of Van-

Ante, Chapter XXI.

† "Harney was a kleptomaniac of the school of the first Napoleon. He occupied first and explained afterwards, and his explanation aggravated the outrage.'—*How Treaty-Making Unmade Canada*, in the *Canadian Monthly* for May, 1876.

couver Island, displayed much discretion, and carefully abstained from committing any overt act which might be construed into one of hostility; though he vigorously protested against the proceeding, and threatened to land a military force on the island to protect British interests. British war ships were summoned from China, and anchored in Esquimault harbour. Erelong General Winfield Scott appeared on the scene as United States Commissioner. Being a soldier, and not a swashbuckler like Harney, the General and Governor Douglas soon came to terms. A joint occupation, until the conflicting claims should be adjusted by arbitration, was speedily agreed upon, and this arrangement subsisted until the final settlement of the question in 1872, to be presently referred to.

Such were the various interests to be reconciled by the Joint Commission. The United States representatives on that body were appointed on the 10th of February, and consisted of the Hon. Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State; the Hon. Robert C. Schenck, United States Minister to the Court of St. James; the Hon. Samuel Nelson, of the Supreme Court; the Hon. Ebenezer R. Hoar, of Massachusetts, and the Hon. George H. Williams, of Oregon. The five British representatives were appointed six days later, and consisted of Earl de Grey and Ripon, Sir Stafford H. Northcote, Sir Edward Thornton, Sir John A. Macdonald, and Mountague Bernard, Chichele Professor of International Law in the University of Oxford. Sir John Macdonald was placed on the Commission for the purpose of watching over the Canadian interests which entered so largely into the subject-matter of the negotiations. The Commissioners held their first meeting at Washington on the 27th of February. Their labours were not completed until the 8th of May, when the treaty, known as the Treaty of Washington, was signed. On the 24th it was ratified by the United States Senate, and on the 17th of June it was formally ratified in London on behalf of both the contracting parties. It provided for the settlement of the Alabama claims by a Board of

Arbitration, to be held at Geneva, in Switzerland. Into the particulars of that arbitration it is not necessary to enter in this work. The San Juan boundary question was left to the arbitrament of the Emperor of Germany, who, in October, 1872, rendered a decision in favour of the United States, whereupon the island was evacuated by the British troops. With respect to the fisheries, the most important matter of consideration so far as Canada was concerned, they were thrown open for a peried of ten years, and it was agreed that fish and fish-oil should be admitted free into the United States and Canada during the same time. The money compensation to Canada for this use of her fisheries by the United States was left to be settled by a Commission. The free navigation of the St. Lawrence and the canals was guaranteed to the Americans, and that of Lake Michigan to British subjects. Other comparatively insignificant privileges, including that of transportation in bond, were granted by the United States, but upon the whole they came out of the controversy, as they had come out of all previous international controversies, with the sunny side of the bargain. Their Commissioners refused to consider the claims of the Dominion for losses sustained by the Fenian raids.

The Washington Treaty as a whole was regarded with great disfavour in Canada. It was felt that our interests had been sacrificed, and Sir John Macdonald was severely taken to task, both in Parliament and in the press. The fact is that Sir John found himself altogether overweighted on the Commission, where Imperial and United States interests were paramount, and where Canadian interests were regarded as being of only secondary moment. The clauses of the treaty relating to Canada required ratification by the Dominion Parliament, and, notwithstanding the widespread dissatisfaction, the ratification was conceded, out of respect for the interests of the Empire at large. The Imperial Government, in turn, showed their appreciation of this by guaran-

teeing a large Dominion loan to aid in the improvement of the canals and the construction of an interoceanic railway, and by continuing a guarantee of a smaller loan previously granted. To make a final disposition of this matter, it may here be mentioned that the Commission appointed to consider the compensation due to Canada for the use of her fisheries met at Halifax in 1877, and awarded a sum of $5,500,000 to the Dominion, which sum, after much grumbling and remonstrance, was paid over by the United States within the time appointed for the purpose.

The Dominion Parliamentary session of 1871 opened on the 15th of February. Sir Francis Hincks's budget speech showed a very satisfactory condition of the finances, the revenue having exceeded the expenditure by more than $200,000. Measures were passed for assimilating the currency, for amending and readjusting the tariff, for the establishment of a new Banking system, and for regulating the management of Savings Banks. But the most important topic under consideration during the session was the admission of British Columbia into the Union. The local Legislature of that colony had in January passed resolutions in favour of such admission, and the question now came before the Legislature of the Dominion. An address to Her Majesty in favour of the project was passed in both Houses, and duly forwarded to its destination. The Government still had to encounter a firm Opposition, but could command a safe working majority. Parliament was prorogued on the 14th of April.

On the 16th of May, in compliance with the address from the Canadian Legislature, and with an address to a similar purport from the Legislature of British Columbia, an Imperial Order in Council was passed admitting that colony to the Confederation. The Order came into operation two months later, when British Columbia became a Province of the Dominion, with a representation in the Canadian Parliament proportionate to its population, which was estimated at

60,000. An annual subsidy of $35,000 was granted to the new Province, in addition to eighty cents per head of the population, and the general provisions of the British North America Act were extended to it. A special feature of the terms of agreement was an undertaking on the part of the Dominion "to secure the commencement simultaneously, within two years after the date of the Union, of the construction of a railway from the Pacific towards the Rocky Mountains, and from such point as [might] be selected east of the Rocky Mountains towards the Pacific, to connect the seaboard of British Columbia with the railway system of Canada; and further to secure the completion of such railway within ten years from the date of the Union." This was the first important initiatory step towards the construction of that great work which has ever since engrossed so large a share of attention, and out of which, as will presently be seen, grew the complications that led to the downfall of the Administration. The Hon. Joseph William Trutch was appointed first Lieutenant-Governor of the newly-created Province.

In the autumn took place the last attempt to subjugate the British Empire by means of a Fenian raid upon Canadian territory. O'Neil, undeterred by his previous failures, planned a "movement" in conjunction with some of Riel's confederates in the Red River rebellion. On the 5th of October a handful of half-drunken tatterdemalions crossed the Manitoba frontier and took possession of the Hudson's Bay Company's fort at Pembina. Scarcely had they done so when a squad of United States troops arrived, and, seizing the "Generals" and about a third of the "forces," marched them back across the boundary-line, and placed them in custody. The rest of the "army" made good their retreat with great promptitude. The attempt from first to last was even more absurd than the former ones had been, and the indignation to which it might otherwise have given rise was merged in a sense of the ridiculous. When the affair was at an end, Riel, who had meanwhile returned to his home

—where he remained undisturbed and free from arrest—tendered his services to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald to assist in opposing the "invasion." His services were not needed, and the Lieutenant-Governor was strongly censured by the press for holding any intercourse with him.

The decennial census taken in April of this year showed the population of Ontario to be 1,629,842; of Quebec, 1,190,505; of Nova Scotia, 387,800; of New Brunswick, 285,777. Adding to these the population of Manitoba, as taken during the previous year, the entire population of the Dominion was, in round numbers, three and a half millions.* The increase since the last census was proportionately much greater in Ontario than in the other Provinces but even in Ontario the increase was somewhat less rapid than had been anticipated. A great change took place in the political situation of that Province during the year. The appropriation of a large sum of money for railway subsidies, without the consent of the local Legislature, proved fatal to Mr. J. S. Macdonald's Government, which resigned in December, and was immediately succeeded by a new one formed under the auspices of Mr. Blake. The incoming Government took decisive action in the matter of the Scott tragedy, and early in the new year an appropriation of $5,000 was made and offered by way of reward for the arrest of the murderers. It was notorious that Riel and Lépine were living quietly at their homes in Manitoba, and that no attempts had been made to arrest or punish them. It was also notorious that the Dominion Government connived at this forbearance, and a strong feeling was aroused against them in Ontario on that account. The truth of the matter was that the Dominion Cabinet were in an awkward position. They were divided among themselves as to the propriety of punishing the rebels, Sir George Cartier and his French supporters being in favour of the

* As noted in the text, the enumeration was made in April, at which time British Columbia had not entered the Dominion.

granting of a complete amnesty. Then, the Government had been compromised by Bishop Taché, who had promised an amnesty on their behalf. Lieutenant-Governor Archibald had also gone a long way in the same direction, and though he had had no authority to make any pledge, yet the Government naturally wished to ratify his promise in so far as that could be done without manifest injustice. Riel had waxed bold, and had come to be spoken of as a candidate for the representation of one of the Manitoba constituencies in the House of Commons. This was a contingency which it was manifestly desirable for the Government to avoid, and negotiations were opened with Bishop—who about this time became Archbishop—Taché, with a view to Riel's withdrawal from Canada. The reward offered by the Ontario Government had the effect of assisting these negotiations by frightening Riel out of the country, and he was supplied with money for his support by Sir John Macdonald. Lépine also received a considerable sum of money through Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, and withdrew from the Dominion.

Thus matters stood at the opening of the last session of the First Dominion Parliament, on the 11th of April, 1872. The session was largely taken up by debates on the Washington Treaty of the previous year. As already mentioned, the sanction of Parliament was obtained, but not without very strong expressions of opinion from the Opposition, who held that Great Britain's policy of "Peace at any price" had once more proved disastrous to Canadian interests. Mr. Blake indulged in a scathing review of various clauses of the treaty, and produced a very perceptible effect upon the House of Commons. Nor was the dissatisfaction confined to the Opposition. The Government themselves passed a resolution expressive of opinions strongly unfavourable to the settlement which had been made. The only ground upon which the treaty was finally accepted was that Imperial interests would be imperilled by refusal. The session was signalized by the passage of the Pacific Railway Bill, whereby

power was conferred upon the Government to make a contract with any chartered company which might apply for the work of constructing the road. Another subject which evoked a long and interesting debate was an Education Act passed during the session of 1871 by the local Legislature of New Brunswick, whereby a new Common School system was introduced into the Province. It struck at the whole Separate School system by enacting that all schools receiving legislative aid must be non-sectarian. The measure had been vehemently opposed by the Roman Catholic population, whose opposition, however, had proved inoperative. They accordingly addressed themselves to the task of endeavouring to secure the disallowance of the Act by the Governor-General; and in this endeavour they were seconded by Roman Catholics throughout the Dominion, more especially by those of Quebec. The Privy Council were petitioned to advise the disallowance. This prayer was refused, upon the ground that the subject was one wherewith the local Parliament of New Brunswick was fully competent to deal, and that to advise a disallowance would be to interfere with the constitutional rights of the Province. The matter was now brought before the Dominion Parliament on a motion for an address to his Excellency, praying for the disallowance of the Act. The House refused to sanction the address, but the minority in its favour presented their case in a very strong light, and convinced all who heard them that they believed themselves to be advocating the removal of a genuine grievance. Numerous amendments were proposed, one of which was finally passed. It expressed regret that the Act was unsatisfactory to a portion of the inhabitants of New Brunswick, and embodied a hope that it would be modified by the local Legislature during the next session. The resolution concluded by recognizing the expediency of obtaining an opinion from England as to the true legal aspect of the question. This allayed the excitement, and for the time put an end to the discussion.

The prorogation took place on the 14th of June, and eight days afterwards the Governor-General bade adieu to Canada. During his stay among us he had been created a peer of the United Kingdom, by the title of Baron Lisgar of Lisgar and Bailieborough, in the county of Cavan. His conduct during his tenure of office was marked by the exercise of calm good sense, without egotism or display. "Lord Lisgar," says one of the foremost writers of the present day,* "was a veteran public servant, satisfied with his career; he had no objects of personal advancement, or desire to fill the papers on his own account. He was content to perform his allotted part without exaggerating it, and to appear as a faithful and dignified representative of the Crown. He did not go on the stump, meddle with the press, or use his high station to propagate his own opinions. His influence was exercised only in teaching colonial politicians to observe English rules, and in tempering the violence of their conflicts. He was courteous, but did not hunt popularity. His hospitality was simply that of an English nobleman: it had no ulterior object, and as an example could do nothing but good. When he spoke, his words were those of sobriety and truth; nor did he ever court applause by indulging in the unmeasured flattery which is at once most seductive and most poisonous to a young nation. If, among English noblemen and public men his counterpart could be found, supposing that the office is to be retained, Canada might go further and fare worse."

Lord Lisgar's successor was Frederick Temple Hamilton-Blackwood, Earl of Dufferin, a nobleman who was destined to win for himself a wider popularity than has been achieved by any other Governor known to Canadian history. Lord Dufferin is the eldest son of the late Captain Price Blackwood, afterwards Fourth Baron Dufferin and Clandeboye, in the peerage of Ireland. His mother

* Professor Goldwin Smith, in an article on "The Canadian Tariff," in the *Contemporary Review* for September, 1881.

was a granddaughter of the illustrious author of "The Rivals," and she transmitted to her son no inconsiderable share of the talent and brilliancy which are inherent in the Sheridan family. He was born at Florence in 1826, was educated at Eton and Oxford, and succeeded to the title upon the death of his father in 1841. His estates lying chiefly in Ireland, he naturally took a special interest in the question of tenant-right, on which he wrote and published a work wherein many of the features of Mr. Gladstone's Irish legislation were foreshadowed. He also delivered several noticeable speeches on Irish questions in the House of Lords. He was a moderate Whig in politics, and his abilities were early recognized by the leaders of that party. In 1850 he was created an English Baron. He at various times filled several diplomatic positions of importance, and was for some years Under-Secretary of State for India. Later on he was successively Under-Secretary to the War Department and Paymaster-General. In 1871 he was created an Earl and Viscount of the United Kingdom, becoming Earl of Dufferin and Viscount Clandeboye. His appointment as Governor-General of Canada was made on the 22nd of May, 1872. He set out a few days afterwards for the seat of his Government, and reached Quebec on the 25th of June, three days after Lord Lisgar's departure.

The First Parliament of the Dominion, having lived out its allotted term, was dissolved by proclamation on the 15th of July, and a general election came off during the summer and autumn. The result was the return of a majority in favour of the existing Administration, though their majority was considerably reduced, and in Ontario there were very perceptible evidences of reaction. The accession of the Blake Ministry to power had tended to strengthen the hands of the Opposition from that Province. The failure of the Dominion Government to punish the murderers of Scott was a serious blow to them in Ontario, to which Province the murdered man had belonged. The Washington Treaty was another ground of offence,

and was very effectively put forward throughout the campaign. The gigantic scheme of a transcontinental railway was also an effective party-cry. The Opposition proved conclusively enough that the agreement which had been entered into to construct the line in ten years was impossible of fulfilment, and the tremendous cost of such an undertaking was represented as likely to involve national bankruptcy. The public mind of Ontario took the alarm, and returned a majority against the Government. Sir Francis Hincks, Minister of Finance, sustained defeat in South Brant, but subsequently found a seat for Vancouver, British Columbia. Even in the Province of Quebec the Government majority was slightly reduced. Sir George Cartier himself was defeated in Montreal East, and was compelled to accept a seat for the Manitoban constituency of Provencher. It is a somewhat significant fact that whereas the Government lost strength in Ontario for not punishing Scott's murderers, their loss of strength in Quebec was largely attributable to their not condoning that murder, as well as all other excesses of the Red River insurgents, by proclaiming a general amnesty. Another fact which arrayed against them the influence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was their action in advising the Governor-General not to disallow the Act respecting Education which had been passed, as already mentioned, by the local Legislature of New Brunswick. In the Maritime Provinces the Government gained very material strength. In Nova Scotia, such was the change wrought in public opinion during the last five years that only one decided opponent of the Government now secured a seat. In New Brunswick the Government won several seats; and in Manitoba and British Columbia all the members were returned as Government supporters. Taking the elections all in all, however, the Opposition gained at least twenty votes, and a number of the supporters of the Administration had become so lukewarm that any contrary wind might array them on the hostile side.

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THE HON. THOMAS MOSS.

In October an important change took place in the composition of the Government of Ontario. The local Legislature had passed an Act prohibiting dual representation so far as that Province was concerned.* Mr. Blake, Premier, and Mr. Mackenzie, who also held office in the local Ministry, was thus compelled to choose between the Federal and Ontario Parliaments as the scene of their future labours. They both chose the former, and this choice necessarily led to a reconstruction of the local Government. At Mr. Blake's suggestion, the Lieutenant-Governor applied to Mr. Mowat—who, it will be remembered, had retired from politics to the bench in 1864†—to reënter the political arena as Premier of Ontario. Mr. Mowat responded favourably to the application, and on the 25th of October the reconstruction took effect, the new Premier assuming the office of Attorney-General—a position which he has retained without intermission down to the present day.

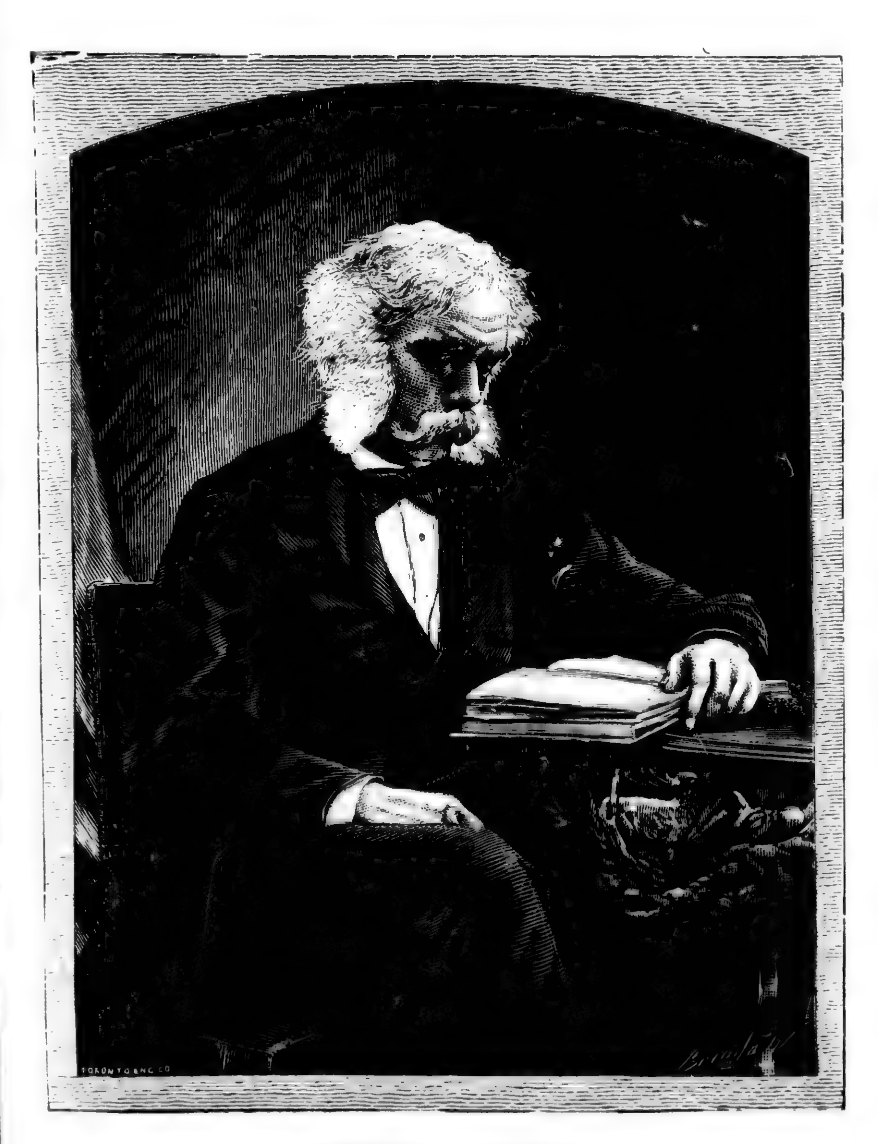
Towards the close of the year the local Government of Quebec were subjected to a severe strain in consequence of certain disclosures which have attained historic significance. Ever since Confederation Mr. Cauchon had sat in the local Legislature for the county of Montmorency. From November, 1867, to July, 1872, he had also held the position of Speaker of the Senate of the Dominion. At the date last named, being desirous of becoming a candidate for the Commons at the impending elections, he had resigned the Speakership; and he had soon afterwards been returned to the Commons for Quebec Centre. In the local Legislature he had all along been recognized as a great power, and his influence had been exerted in favour of the Government of the day, which was con-

* A similar measure had been passed by the local Assembly of Quebec, but had been rejected by the Legislative Council. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the local Legislatures had prohibited dual representation years before. See *ante*, p. 478, *note*. During the session of 1873 the Dominion Parliament carried a general measure to the same effect.

† *Ante*, p. 448.

ducted by Mr. Chauveau. Certain deplorable facts having become known to Mr. Joly, leader of the local Opposition, that gentleman, during the session of 1872, had moved for and obtained the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee of investigation. The facts elicited at this investigation were now made public, and the result was disastrous to Mr. Cauchon's reputation. It was proved that he, while occupying the position of a member of the local Assembly, had long been a secret contractor with the local Government in respect of the Beauport Lunatic Asylum. The disclosures were of a most humiliating character, but no good purpose would be served by going into them at full length in these pages. Suffice it to say that a credible witness swore that Mr. Cauchon had admitted the spending of large sums of money in securing the return of members favourable to Mr. Chauveau's Government, and that this had confessedly been done in order that he, Mr. Cauchon, might be able to force from that Government a renewal of a contract to which he was virtually, though not nominally, a party. Such evidence as this could not be ignored, and Mr. Cauchon, in order to avoid expulsion, was compelled to resign his seat in the local House. His constituents showed how fit they were to be entrusted with the franchise by straightway reëlecting him. His Parliamentary influence, however, was gone, and the aroma of the transaction has ever since clung to him. The Government itself was to a considerable extent compromised by the disclosures, and was reconstructed early in the following year, when Mr. Chauveau retired from the leadership.

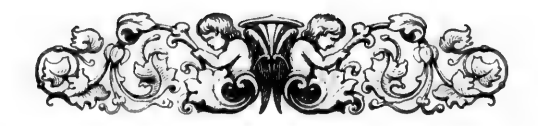
In December the Hon. Alexander Morris succeeded Mr. Archibald as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. His acceptance several months before of the post of Chief Justice of that Province had caused a vacancy in the Dominion Cabinet, in which he had held the portfolio of Minister of Inland Revenue. The vacant portfolio was assigned to Dr. Tupper, who resigned the Presidency of the Council. The latter office was accepted by Mr. John



THE HON. H. G. JOLY.

O'Connor, member for Essex. Early in the following year other ministerial readjustments took place. In January Dr. Theodore Robitaille, member for Bonaventure, became Receiver-General, in place of Mr. Chapias, who retired from the Ministry. Sir Francis Hincks had some months before intimated a wish to retire from office, and in February his retirement was consummated, though he retained his seat in Parliament until the deposition of the Government in the following November. Mr. Tilley accepted the vacant portfolio of Minister of Finance, and Dr. Tupper succeeded to Mr. Tilley's former place at the head of the Customs Department. A few days afterwards the Inland Revenue Department was assumed by Mr. O'Connor.





CHAPTER XLI.

RECENT YEARS.

"What, then, have you, who call yourselves practical men, and despise the dreamers of dreams—what have you to suggest? Do you really believe that things can always go on as they are going now? . . . Say whether you think it possible that great colonies like those of British North America and those of Australasia are likely to remain always content with their present anomalous condition? . . . What, then, do you expect? Annexation to America in the one case; independence in the other; or perhaps independence in both, and in all? To that result, if it must come to that, the mind of England would have to reconcile itself. She has no imperial privilege to interfere with the destinies of the world."—MCCARTHY'S *History of Our Own Times*, Chapter LV.



HE new Parliament assembled on the 5th of March, 1873. Mr. Cockburn was without opposition reëlected Speaker of the House of Commons. Mr. Chauveau had a few days before resigned his place in the Quebec Cabinet, as well as his seat in the House of Commons, and had been appointed to the Speakership of the Senate—a position which had become vacant in consequence of Mr. Cauchon's resignation some months before, as mentioned in the last chapter. The Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne was adopted in both Houses without division, though the weakness of the Government in the Commons was demonstrated by certain preliminary divisions respecting disputed elections.

Much important business was transacted during the session. Prince Edward Island having signified a wish to enter the Union, and the terms of admission having been satisfactorily arranged, the necessary legislative action was now taken by the Dominion Parliament. An Address to Her Majesty was adopted, and a Bill passed providing for the admission of the Island as a Province of

the Confederation. The Provincial debt was placed at $4,701,050, being $50 per head of the population (94,021), as shown by the census returns of 1871. Interest at five per cent. per annum was to be from time to time allowed on the difference between that sum and the actual amount of the Provincial debt. An annual sum was also allowed by the Dominion for the extinction of the claims of the great landed proprietors of the colony under old grants. The annual subsidy was placed at $30,000, eighty cents being likewise allowed for each inhabitant.

In addition to numerous other matters of national importance, the financial relations between the Dominion and the Provinces formed the subject of careful deliberation during the session. The results were apparent in an Act passed under the auspices of Mr. Tilley, whereby a readjustment of the debt of the Dominion was effected, and whereby the subsidies granted to some of the Provinces were increased. But that which renders the first session of 1873 especially memorable in our annals is the fact that it gave birth to the Pacific Railway Scandal. The circumstances out of which this huge *esclandre* developed itself are by no means pleasant to dwell upon. It may be said indeed that the episode, take it for all in all, is the most deplorable that comes within the purview of the present narrative; and it shall be told with as much brevity as is consistent with a clear apprehension of the facts involved in it.

Two very wealthy companies had applied for and obtained charters of incorporation, and had both made strenuous exertions to obtain the contract for building the line of railway which was to give us direct communication from the Atlantic to the Pacific. At the head of one of these companies was Sir Hugh Allan, of Montreal. At the head of the other was the Hon. David Lewis Macpherson, of Toronto. There had been attempts at amalgamation, but the opposing interests could not be reconciled, and, the negotiations to that end having proved ineffectual, the Government had abstained

from giving the contract to either of the companies. A new company had accordingly been formed under the Presidency of Sir Hugh Allan. It had obtained a charter on the 5th of February, 1873—a month before the opening of the session. During the next few weeks vague whispers had got abroad that all was not as it should be with respect to the granting of this charter, but nothing was definitely known about the matter, and no suspicion was commonly entertained of anything worse than irregularity. The public mind, however, was soon to undergo a rude awakening. Mr. Huntington, member for Shefford, had become possessed of information convincing him that gross iniquity had been practised, and on the 2nd of April he rose in his place in the House of Commons and gave utterance to his convictions. He announced, in effect, that he believed he could prove to the satisfaction of a committee that there had been a corrupt sale of the charter by the Government to Sir Hugh Allan and his friends. The facts which he professed to be able to "establish by satisfactory evidence" were indicated in a resolution then and there moved by him, and were as follows: "That in anticipation of the legislation of last session, as to the Pacific Railway, an agreement was made between Sir Hugh Allan, acting for himself and certain other Canadian promoters, and G. W. McMullen, acting for certain United States capitalists, whereby the latter agreed to furnish all the funds necessary for the construction of the contemplated railway, and to give the former a certain percentage of interest in consideration of their interest and position; the scheme agreed upon being ostensibly that of a Canadian company with Sir Hugh Allan at its head: That the Government were aware that negotiations were pending between these parties: That subsequently an understanding was come to between the Government and Sir Hugh Allan and Mr. Abbott, M.P., that Sir Hugh and his friends should advance a large sum of money for the purpose of aiding the elections of Ministers and their supporters at

the ensuing general election, and that he and his friends should receive the contract for the construction of the railway: That accordingly Sir Hugh Allan did advance a large sum of money for the purpose mentioned, and at the solicitation, and under the pressing instance of Ministers That part of the moneys expended by Sir Hugh Allan in connection with the obtaining of the Act of Incorporation and charter were paid to him by the said United States capitalists under the agreement with him." The resolution asked for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry.

For a moment the House was literally stricken dumb by astonishment. The charges were of so monstrous a character that honourable members might well be excused if they declined to take them into serious consideration. But as soon as the first shock of surprise had subsided a division was called for, and the motion, which was treated as one of want of confidence in the Government, was rejected by a vote of 107 to 76.

A few hours more, and the country at large partook of the astonishment which the motion had produced in the House. The most contrary opinions were expressed as to the truth of the charges. By Ministerialists generally they were utterly discredited, and there were not a few supporters of the Opposition who refused to give credence to them. It was not surprising that this should be so, for the offences charged were such as almost to carry with them their own refutation. But Sir John Macdonald well knew that this state of things could not last. The Opposition press came out with most imperative demands for investigation. Public opinion would not long be satisfied with reticence on his part. He had maintained silence in the House while the charges had been read, and his doing so had seemed quite consistent with the conduct of a high-minded man who disdained to defend himself against outrageous calumny. But he well knew that he was not strong enough to maintain such a stand in the face of an outspoken press

which would keep alive the flame of public excitement, and which could only be put to silence in one way. He made the best of the situation, and when the House met on the 3rd he gave notice that on the next Government day—which would be Tuesday, the 8th—he would himself move for the appointment of a committee. The motion was duly made on the specified date. A committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of three Ministerialists and two members of the Opposition;* but it had no power to take evidence on oath, and the proceedings were delayed until a Bill conferring such power could be passed through Parliament. A Bill was passed without opposition, and assented to by the Governor-General on the 3rd of May; but as grave doubts were expressed as to its legality a certified copy was forwarded to England for approval. Meanwhile, as it was the law of the land, there was nothing to prevent the committee from acting upon it, and proceeding with the inquiry; but the Premier made an appeal for further delay on the ground that Sir George Cartier, Sir Hugh Allan and Mr. Abbott, all of whom, as it was alleged, were material witnesses, were absent in England. The Opposition members disapproved of the proposed delay, but were overborne by the Ministerialists. Mr. Huntington himself strenuously urged that the committee should proceed. He pointed out that his charges had been known to Sir George, Sir Hugh and Mr. Abbott for a full month, and that those gentlemen had had ample time to return to Canada if so disposed. He charged the Premier with a manifest desire to delay and baffle the inquiry. Sir John replied that he was on the contrary anxious to promote it, but that as the Government was practically on its trial, it was only fair that the inquiry should not be prejudiced by undue haste in the absence of material witnesses. The result of the discussion was that the ministerial majority

* The Ministerialists were the Hon. J. G. Blanchet, the Hon. James Macdonald, of Pictou, and the Hon. John Hillyard Cameron. The Opposition members were the Hon. Edward Blake and the Hon. A. A. Dorion.

triumphed, and that the committee adjourned to meet at Montreal on the 2nd of July. On the 23rd of May Parliament itself adjourned to the 13th of August, when it was to assemble for the purpose of receiving the committee's report, but not, as was commonly understood, for the ordinary purposes of legislation.

On the 14th of June two additions were made to the Ministry, Thomas Nicholson Gibbs, member for South Ontario, becoming Secretary of State for the Provinces,* and Hugh Macdonald, member for Antigonish, taking the Presidency of the Privy Council. On the 1st of July there was a readjustment of some of the portfolios, but no further additions were made to the membership of the Cabinet. On the same date Prince Edward Island entered Confederation. The Hon. William C. F. Robinson, who had for some years administered the affairs of that colony, was temporarily continued in office.

It is doubtful whether Mr. Huntington, at the time of moving his resolution on the 2nd of April, had any very precise knowledge as to the nature of the negotiations therein referred to. His information was probably such as to satisfy himself, but it could hardly have been sufficiently definite to fix the guilt of the transaction with absolute certainty. He doubtless hoped to obtain additional evidence by means of his committee. Long before the date to which the committee had adjourned he succeeded in obtaining a knowledge of facts which went far to confirm his charges, and on the 2nd of July he attended at Montreal for the purpose of supporting the serious indictment which he had laid. The Chairman, however, announced that the Oaths Bill had been disallowed in England, and that therefore the committee had no power to take evidence on oath. As the three ministerial members declined to receive any unsworn testimony the inquiry fell through. The Chairman submitted a letter

*In place of Mr. Howe, who had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia on the 1st of May, and who had died on the 1st of June.

addressed to him by the Premier, offering to issue a Royal Commission to the members of the committee, conferring upon them the power of examining witnesses under oath, whereby they would be enabled to proceed with the investigation. The Opposition members declined to accede to this proposal, urging that the matter should not be withdrawn from the consideration of Parliament, and that "the issue of a Royal Commission by a Government to inquire into charges against itself would be an unheard-of proceeding, and would not aid but prejudice the inquiry by the House." After some discussion the committee adjourned to the 13th of August, when it was to meet at Ottawa to receive further instructions from the House of Commons.

On the 4th of July an additional impetus was given to the public excitement on the subject by the publication in the Toronto *Globe* and the Montreal *Herald* of certain correspondence between Sir Hugh Allan and two American contractors. In this correspondence Sir Hugh Allan himself appeared in a most unfavourable light, and there were references to Sir George Cartier which stood in great need of explanation, but the other members of the Government were not compromised thereby, and the general tenor of the correspondence certainly did not justify the serious charges brought by Mr. Huntington against the Government as a whole. Sir Hugh Allan promptly came out with a sworn statement explanatory of the transactions from first to last. It put the worst features of the correspondence in a much more favourable light for the Government, and the ministerial press began to attack Mr. Huntington furiously for having made such damnifying charges on such slight grounds. But the end had not been reached. On the 18th of July a narrative from the pen of Mr. G. W. McMullen, one of the American contractors above referred to, appeared in the Toronto *Globe* and Montreal *Herald*. The writer was not a man whose mere *ipse dixit* would have been entitled to much weight, but his story

embodied copies of letters and telegrams from Sir John Macdonald and Sir George Cartier, the genuineness of which it seemed impossible to doubt, and which went far to prove corrupt dealing on the part of the two leading spirits in the Administration. It was apparent that some arrangement had been arrived at between Sir George Cartier and Sir Hugh Allan in July, 1872, and that in pursuance of that arrangement the latter had advanced very large sums for election purposes to Sir John, Sir George, and Mr. Langevin.

The Ministry positively reeled under this staggering blow. As for Sir George Cartier, he had died in England several months before, and was thus beyond the reach of earthly reproach, but as regarded the survivors, the country showed every disposition to hold them to a strict account. The Opposition press had never before had such a theme ready to their hands, and they did not fail to make the most of it. The 13th of August was looked forward to with eager expectation by everyone except the inculpated Ministers and their out-and-out supporters.

At last the fateful day arrived. As has already been mentioned, it had been commonly understood that Parliament was to meet merely to receive and act upon the report of the committee of investigation. But no distinct agreement to that effect had been arrived at, and even had the case been otherwise, such an agreement would not have been binding on the House. Moreover, such an agreement, if made, must have been based upon the supposition that the committee would meanwhile have completed the investigation, and that nothing would remain to be done but to receive and act upon their report. But, owing to circumstances already explained, the committee had no report to present, and there was thus no business to be transacted. The Opposition, however, urged that there should be no delay in inquiring into the McMullen disclosures, and that Parliament should at once proceed with the investigation. They mustered in full force, whereas many

Ministerialists who represented remote constituencies were absent. Under these circumstances the Ministry naturally desired a prorogation, in order to give their supporters an opportunity of attending. But as matter of fact, many of the ministerial members were accessible, and their presence could easily have been obtained by the Government at very short notice. Others had refrained from attending because they had been informed that their presence was not desired. These facts were known to the Opposition, who peremptorily refused to assent to the proposal for a prorogation. Some of the more rabid even went so far as to insist that the Governor-General should be called upon to dismiss his Ministers without further ado.

At the time of the adjournment in May, his Excellency had had no intention of being present at the meeting on the 13th of August. When the McMullen narrative saw the light he had been holiday-making in the Maritime Provinces; but upon reading the astounding disclosures in the public prints he had determined to be present in person at the meeting of Parliament. He returned to Ottawa just in time to hold a Cabinet Council before the hour fixed for assembling. He was assured by the Premier that all charges could be satisfactorily explained before a competent tribunal. The Premier strongly urged that the understanding as to the prorogation should be carried out, in order that the country might be fully represented in Parliament during the investigation. The Opposition, on the other hand, presented a memorial to his Excellency praying that there should be no prorogation until Parliament should have had an opportunity of determining upon the proper steps to be taken. His Excellency acted upon the advice of his Ministers, exacting however a condition that Parliament should be convened without delay. The prorogation took place amid a scene of tumult which was a faint reflex of that memorable episode in the English House of Commons with which every reader is familiar. Cries of "Privilege! privilege!" resounded

on every side, and the Ministerialists marched off to the Senate Chamber, leaving the Opposition members in their places in the House of Commons. The latter at once proceeded to hold an indignation meeting, at which some strongly-worded resolutions were passed on the subject of the prorogation.

Lord Dufferin was for some weeks assailed with much rancour by the Reform press, and it was long before he succeeded in reëstablishing his reputation among the Opposition. For this hostility there was certainly no sufficient cause. His Excellency's conduct throughout seems to have been dictated by a knowledge of and a respect for strict constitutional usage. Any seeming inconsistency on his part during this trying period is properly attributable, not to Lord Dufferin, but to his advisers.* The Premier had been in power, almost without interruption, for about eighteen years. The Government could command a majority of votes in the House of Commons, and might thus reasonably claim to possess the confidence of the country. It was consequently entitled to the confidence of Her Majesty's Representative. The charges were monstrous in themselves, and were to a large extent founded upon the unsupported testimony of a disappointed contractor whose character was by no means unimpeachable. Their truth was denied by the Premier, who hurled them back with all the scorn of an honest man smarting under a sense of injustice, and declared that he could satisfactorily explain anything that seemed open to question. Under these circumstances, was it to be expected that his Excellency would withdraw his confidence from his responsible advisers at the bidding of a minority of the House of Commons, and before the truth of the charges had been established by evidence? Those advisers urged a prorogation. In doing so they did not act wisely for their own interests, as was clearly proved

*For a review of this question, see Todd's *Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies*, p. 444 *et seq.* See also *The Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. III., p. 8 *et seq.*

during the next elections; but had Lord Dufferin declined to accept their advice his refusal would have been equivalent to a dismissal. All this seems clear enough now. It was perhaps not quite so apparent in August, 1873, and the Opposition were not in a generous mood.

The Opposition also blamed his Excellency for his prompt transmission of the Oaths Bill to England, and accused him of having done so for the purpose of playing into Sir John's hands by causing delay. That Lord Dufferin was justified in transmitting the Bill—nay, that he was bound to do so, when so advised by his Ministers—seems clear enough. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that he was wrongly advised, if not grossly deceived, by those in whom he was justly entitled to repose confidence.

On the day after the prorogation a Royal Commission was issued by his Excellency under an Act passed in 1868. It authorized and enjoined the three Commissioners named therein* to investigate and report upon the charges made by Mr. Huntington. The Commissioners met at Ottawa on the 18th, and summoned that gentleman to appear before them. They also requested him by letter to furnish a list of his witnesses. He replied, declining to appear before the Commission, and assigning his reasons. He claimed that, as he had made his charges as a member of the House of Commons, and as that House had ever since been ready to investigate them, and was still determined to do so, it would be inconsistent with his duty as a member of Parliament to recognize an inferior tribunal. Other material witnesses followed Mr. Huntington's example by declining to appear before the Commission; McMullen himself being among the number. Thirty-six witnesses appeared and gave evidence. Among them were Sir John Macdonald, Sir Francis Hincks, Sir Hugh Allan, Mr. Langevin and Mr. J. J. C. Abbott. It was proved by Sir Hugh Allan that he had

*The Hon. Charles Dewey Day, the Hon. Antoine Polette, and James Robert Gowan.

contributed sums amounting in the aggregate to $350,000 in aid of the fund required for the last elections; that he had done this at the request of Sir John Macdonald and Sir George Cartier; and that the fund was to be used in securing the return of candidates favourable to the Government. A letter written by Sir George Cartier to Sir Hugh Allan, while the elections were pending, was put in evidence, from which it appeared that any funds advanced by Sir Hugh were to be recouped to him; although Sir Hugh himself admitted that he "did not well see from what source" repayment was to come.* Sir John's own evidence showed that he had personally trafficked with Sir Hugh Allan, and that he had received money from him to be used for election purposes. No need to go over the humiliating story in minute detail. The fate of the Ministry was sealed. The committee reported the evidence, and the country anxiously awaited the meeting of Parliament, which was summoned for the 23rd of October.

The appointed time soon came round, and with it came a full attendance of members of Parliament at Ottawa. The Speech from the Throne was delivered before a crowded House. It announced that the Report of the Commissioners would be laid before Parliament, and that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, having been unable to make the necessary financial arrangements, had surrendered their charter. The debate on the Address in Reply

* "Had Sir Hugh Allan, in his personal capacity, advanced funds to carry his friends triumphant at the polls, his act would have gone unquestioned. But Sir Hugh was an applicant for a Government contract, and the Ministry had accepted money from him, and by the assistance of this money continued themselves in office. This laid them open to grave suspicion, and though the gravamen of Mr. Huntington's charge that the contract for the Pacific Railway was given to Sir Hugh Allan, with whom were associated certain American capitalists, in consideration of a large sum of money advanced to leading members of the Government to enable them to sustain themselves at the head of affairs, was not proved, public condemnation was awakened, and the Ministry fell. The head and front of their offending was their acceptance of money from the hands of a man who was a Government contractor."—*Canada Under the Administration of the Earl of Dufferin*, by George Stewart, Jr., p. 236.

was opened on the 27th. It lasted a week, in the course of which there were frequent defections from the ministerial ranks. The most tremendous onslaught on the Government was made by Mr. Blake, who delivered a speech of remarkable power, many passages of which must have fallen upon the inculpated Ministers like strokes from a flail. Sir John made an eloquent and pathetic appeal, which displayed a marvellous fertility of resource, and which would certainly have redeemed his position had it not been absolutely irredeemable. But the eloquence of a Chatham, or even of a Demosthenes, would have been inefficacious to restore public trust in the statesman who, through a long succession of years, had enjoyed a larger share of public confidence than any man of his time. It was felt that he had abused his power, and that he should be deposed. Early in the debate Mr. Mackenzie, who was leader of the Opposition, moved a resolution of want of confidence, but the Government, seeing that they must inevitably be beaten, did not wait for the vote. On the morning of the 5th of November Sir John placed the ministerial resignation in the Governor's hands. His Excellency at once sent for Mr. Mackenzie and entrusted him with the formation of a new Administration. On the 7th the announcement was made that that gentleman had succeeded in his task. The names of the new Ministers were as follows:—

The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie (Premier), Minister of Public Works.
" " A. A. Dorion, Minister of Justice.
" " Edward Blake, without portfolio.
" " Albert J. Smith, Minister of Marine and Fisheries.
" " Luc Letellier de St. Just, Minister of Agriculture.
" " Richard J. Cartwright, Minister of Finance.
" " David Laird, Minister of the Interior.*

* This Department was created by an Act passed during the first session of 1873, which abolished the Department of Secretary of State for the Provinces.

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THE HON. ADAM CROOKS.

The Hon. David Christie, Secretary of State.
" " Isaac Burpee, Minister of Customs.
" " Donald A. Macdonald, Postmaster-General.
" " Thomas Coffin, Receiver-General.
" " Telesphore Fournier, Minister of Inland Revenue.
" " William Ross, Minister of Militia and Defence.
" " Richard W. Scott, without portfolio.

Parliament was prorogued by his Excellency during the afternoon of the same day, and the members returned to their homes. The Liberal-Conservative Government had fallen, and had dragged down several reputations in their fall. A large number of important appointments* made by them on the very day of their resignation did not tend to place them in a more favourable light before the country, but the incoming Administration allowed the appointments to remain, with a few exceptions, undisturbed.

Mr. Blake did not escape the charge of inconsistency. Ever since his entry into public life he had contended that thirteen Ministers were too many; yet he now made one of a Ministry of fourteen. He however merely joined his friends at their urgent request, and because it was considered that his name would materially strengthen the Government. It was not intended that he should permanently hold office, and he accepted neither portfolio nor salary, so that his inconsistency was rather apparent than real. Such trifling charges as this, moreover, were the worst that could be laid against the new Ministry, and they seemed unworthy of mention when compared with the serious derelictions from duty which had been brought home to the leading members of the late

* Two of the Ministers were themselves appointed to office at this time, Mr. Tilley succeeding the Hon. L. A. Wilmot as Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, and Mr. (Hugh) Macdonald becoming a Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Conspicuous among the other appointments was that of Mr. John Crawford, member for West Toronto, who succeeded the Hon. W. P. Howland as Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

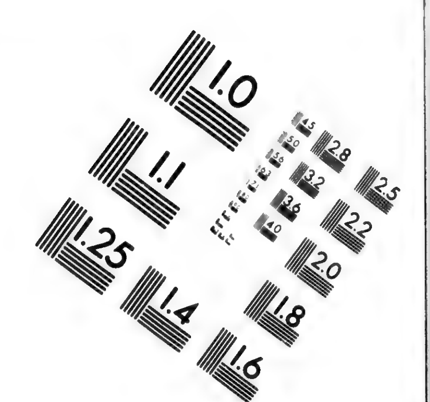
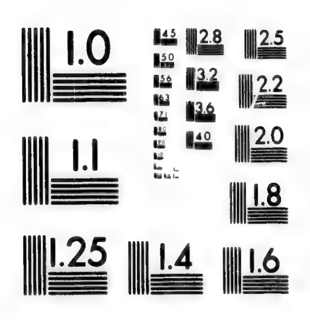
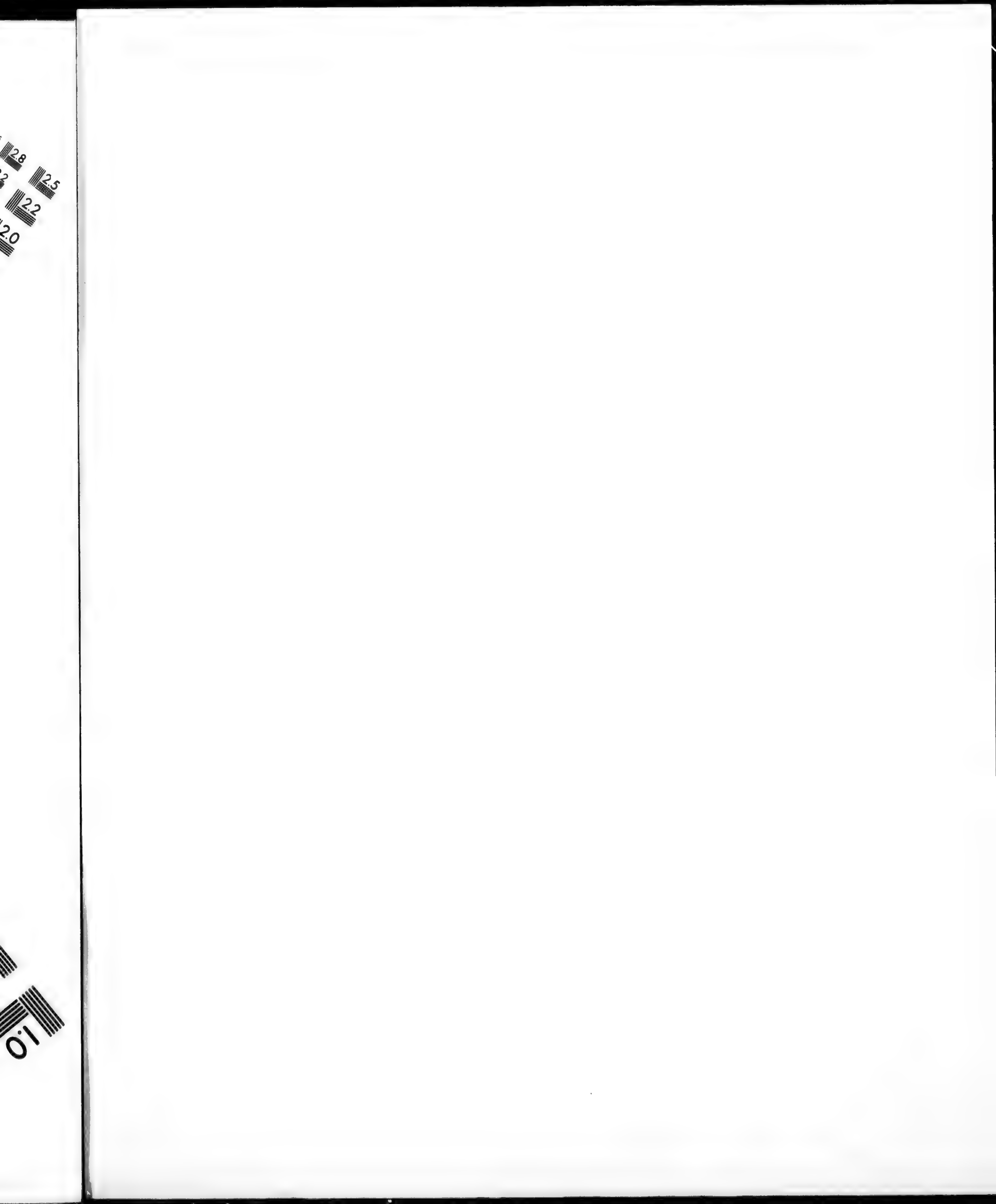


IMAGE EVALUATION
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Government. They produced little or no effect on the electors when the new Ministers returned to their constituents after accepting office. Most of the latter were elected by acclamation, and the rest by large majorities. Mr. Mackenzie felt that there should be a general appeal to the country, in order that an opportunity might be afforded to the constituencies to pronounce upon the events of the past few months. It had by this time come to be matter of notoriety that a number of members had obtained their seats by the grossest corruption—that they had in fact "bribed their way into Parliament with Sir Hugh Allan's money." It was right, then, that the House of Commons should be purged by the ordeal of a new election. In compliance with Mr. Mackenzie's advice to that effect, Parliament was dissolved on the 2nd of January, 1874, and writs for a new election were issued.

The policy of the new Administration was not defined with any great strictness. The agreement with British Columbia to build the Pacific Railway within ten years from 1871 being manifestly impossible of fulfilment, the new Government did not consider themselves bound by it. They announced that the project was not abandoned, but would be proceeded with as rapidly as might be done consistently with the state of the finances and the requirements of the country. There being no company able and willing to undertake the work of construction, the Government proposed to build the road in sections, and to avail themselves of the "water-stretches" along the route, until the final completion of the enterprise. The expediency of connecting the more settled parts of Canada with Manitoba and the North-West with as little delay as possible was admitted, and it was declared that the surveys of that portion of the line would be at once proceeded with. Among other important projects to which the new Ministry pledged themselves to devote their best energies were a readjustment of the franchise, and the taking of votes by ballot; the abolition of

real estate qualification for members of the Legislature; a revision of the Militia and Insolvency laws; the creation of a general Court of Appeal for the Dominion; an improvement of the canal system, so as to attract to Canadian channels the vast traffic of the west; the promotion of immigration on an extensive scale; and the settlement and development of unoccupied territory. Some of these projects were new; others were old; and all of them were of more or less efficacy during the hot election campaign which followed. But the coign of vantage *par excellence* was the Pacific Scandal. The subject was bad enough, in all conscience, and it must be confessed that the Reform party made the most of it. It proved wondrously effective, and the late Ministerialists sustained a crushing defeat. Sir John Macdonald himself narrowly escaped defeat in his own stronghold of Kingston. Mr. Carling, one of the most prominent of his supporters, was defeated in London, where his position had been supposed to be impregnable. Toronto returned three new supporters of Mr. Mackenzie, whose star was so manifestly in the ascendant that the Opposition, for the time, felt utterly prostrate and broken. When Parliament met on the 26th of March the new Government found themselves supported by a majority of about eighty in a House of 206. The *personnel* of the Ministry had meanwhile undergone some modification. Mr. Blake had resigned, Mr. Christie had been appointed Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Scott had become Secretary of State, and Mr. Huntington had accepted the Presidency of the Privy Council. These adjustments reduced the number of Ministers to thirteen, the customary number under the late *régime.* Mr. Anglin, member for Gloucester, New Brunswick, was unanimously elected to the Speakership of the House of Commons.

Mr. Mackenzie remained in power from the 7th of November, 1873, to the 16th of October, 1878. The most cursory review of the events of the intervening period is all that can be attempted

in the limited space at the writer's disposal. From the very outset the Administration were called upon to grapple with difficulties of a formidable character. The three or four years preceding their advent to power had been a period of speculation. Canadian merchants had imported very largely, and the revenue from Customs duties had become proportionally large. The public expenditure had been lavish, and engagements had been entered into which the incoming Government could not repudiate, though in some cases they were in advance of the country's needs. In 1874 the financial depression set in in the United States, and it was soon reflected here. Our exports diminished, and our imports fell off at such a rate as to seriously affect the revenue. The lumber market shrank to insignificant proportions, and a large number of people were thrown out of employment. But the financial embarrassment was only one out of a number of serious difficulties that stared the Mackenzie Administration in the face. The questions relating to the New Brunswick School law, the Riel Amnesty, and the bargain made with British Columbia all threatened to produce consequences serious to the peace of the country, if not to Confederation itself. The origin of the first-named difficulty has already been explained.* It continued to engross public attention in New Brunswick for several years, and also gave rise to long debates in the Dominion Parliament. The Imperial authorities, however, pronounced the passing of the Act to have been within the jurisdiction of the local Legislature, and the minority were compelled to give way, though the agitation led to considerable relaxation of some of the restrictions most offensive to Roman Catholics. The Riel Amnesty question was a bequest from the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70. Though sentence of outlawry had been passed upon Riel, he had, as already narrated, returned to his home, where he was for some time permitted to

* *Ante*, p. 517.

remain without molestation. His subsequent withdrawal from the Province, and the pecuniary aid received by him from Sir John Macdonald, have also been recorded on a former page.* In 1873 he was elected a member of the House of Commons by the constituency of Provencher, Manitoba, where a vacancy had occurred through the death of Sir George Cartier, the sitting member. He did not at that time venture to present himself at Ottawa to take his seat, but at the general election of 1874 he was again returned for the same constituency, and soon afterwards he secretly proceeded to the capital, where, on the 30th of March, he was introduced to the Clerk of the House, before whom he took the customary oath, and signed the roll of membership. He did not attempt to take part in the proceedings of the House, but quietly withdrew himself from the public gaze. Many members, however, especially those from Ontario, keenly felt the indignity of sharing Parliamentary honours with a murderer and a rebel. On the 15th of April Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, member for North Hastings, moved his expulsion from Parliament, upon the ground that an indictment for murder had been found against him, and that he was a fugitive from justice. The motion was carried on the following day by a vote of 124 to 68. Riel was afterwards reëlected for Provencher, but he did not again presume to take advantage of the circumstance. Then arose the question of amnesty. All things considered, it would not have been wise to proceed to extremities against him. As has already been seen, the late Government had been committed, at any rate to some extent, on the subject of an amnesty, and it was incumbent upon their successors to respect the obligations thereby imposed. Moreover, such political importance as Riel had ever possessed was entirely gone, and it would have seemed monstrous that he should have been made to answer with his life for his misdeeds, after being secretly supplied with money by the late Govern-

* *Ante*, p. 516.

ment to keep out of the way of arrest. During the session of 1875, on motion of Mr. Mackenzie, the House of Commons passed a resolution in favour of an address to the Governor-General praying that a general amnesty should be extended to all participants in the Red River Rebellion except Riel, Lépine* and O'Donoghue, and to the two former after five years' banishment. In compliance with the terms of this address, the amnesty was formally proclaimed on the 25th of April. In 1877 an amnesty was also granted to O'Donoghue, who had been excluded from that of 1875 in consequence of his participation in the Fenian Raid in Manitoba in 1871. A formal sentence of outlawry having been pronounced against Riel by the Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba, the member for Provencher was disqualified from sitting in Parliament, and the House of Commons, on motion of Mr. Mackenzie, recorded the fact in its Journals.

The British Columbia difficulty arose out of the dissatisfaction of the people of that Province with Mr. Mackenzie's repudiation of the late Government's undertaking to build the Pacific Railway within ten years from 1871. The surveys which were in progress brought to light the tremendous obstacles to be encountered, and it was evident that considerably more than ten years must elapse before a railway train could pass from the Atlantic to the Pacific over Canadian territory. With a view to conciliating the British Columbians, and of bringing about a modification of the terms of Union, Mr. James D. Edgar, of Toronto, a prominent member of the Reform party, was sent out to Victoria by the Government in the early months of 1874. Mr. Edgar found the people of British Columbia in a state of much excitement respecting the threatened postponement in building the railway. The situation of affairs was fully discussed between him and Mr. Walkem, the Premier of the

* Lépine having again returned to Manitoba, he had meanwhile been arrested, tried, found guilty, and condemned to death by the Court of Queen's Bench for that Province.

Provincial Government, but the discussion came to nothing, and the emissary returned from his fruitless mission. In the ensuing summer Mr. Walkem repaired to England, to urge the matter upon the attention of the Imperial Government. The Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, tendered his services as an arbitrator between the Dominion and British Columbia. His offer was accepted, and in due course he pronounced his award. The "Carnarvon Terms," as they are called, put an end to the quarrel. They imposed upon Canada the necessity of immediately building a railway from Esquimault to Nanaimo, on Vancouver's Island; of vigorously pushing on the surveys on the mainland; of expending at least $2,000,000 a year on the construction of the British Columbia portion of the road, after the location of the line; and of completing the road from the Pacific to Lake Superior on or before the 31st of December, 1890. In pursuance of this decision a Bill providing for the construction of the Esquimault and Nanaimo Railway was introduced by Mr. Mackenzie into the House of Commons during the next session. It passed the Commons, but was defeated in the Senate, and was not again brought forward. The British Columbian discontent burst forth afresh, and was not allayed until 1876, when Lord Dufferin visited the Province, and reassured the people as to the intentions of the Dominion Government.

During 1876 the operation of the tenth clause of the Ashburton Treaty* was for a short time suspended, owing to the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to surrender certain fugitives to the United States, unless upon an express undertaking by the latter that the persons surrendered should not be tried for any other offence than that for which extradition had been demanded. Such an undertaking was imposed by an Imperial Act passed several years before, but the Act, of course, did not bind the Government of the United States, who declined to enter into the required

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 205, and *note*.

stipulation, and the fugitives were accordingly set at liberty. The authorities at Washington thereupon regarded the tenth clause of the Ashburton Treaty as being practically abrogated, and they ceased either to make or to grant demands for the extradition of offenders. This state of things threatened to lead to unpleasant results to the empire at large, but more especially to Canada, owing to our proximity to the States. Several Canadian criminals escaped across the border, where they were free from all danger of arrest. United States criminals took refuge in Canada, and thus added to a very undesirable element in our population. In view of the great inconvenience arising, and likely to arise, from such an unsatisfactory state of international amenities, Her Majesty's Government erelong thought proper to recede from the position they had assumed, and the operation of the clause was thereupon restored. A new Extradition Act was passed by the Canadian Parliament in 1877, but by one of its clauses the Act was not to come into force until the Imperial Extradition Act of 1870 should be suspended in Canada. The Order in Council suspending the last-named statute in Canada has not yet been passed, and the Act of 1877 therefore remains a dead letter up to the present time.*

Scarcely had Mr. Mackenzie succeeded to power ere the question of protection versus a revenue tariff began to assume large proportions. Reference has been made to the increase in the amount of public liabilities and the depressed state of trade. The depression continued all through Mr. Mackenzie's term of office, and was probably the most potent of all the difficulties wherewith his Administration had to contend. The combined efforts of decreasing revenue and increasing expenditure rendered it necessary that some steps should be taken for the replenishment of the public exchequer. During the session of 1874 Mr. Cartwright, Minister of Finance, introduced and carried a measure

*See *In Re Williams*, 7 Ontario Prac. Reports, p. 275.



THE HON. SIR RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT.

increasing the Customs duties on unenumerated imports from 15 to 17½ per cent. This afforded some slight increase in the revenue, but there was nevertheless a continued deficit, and no prospect of any adequate improvement was apparent. In order to carry on the public works in progress it repeatedly became necessary to procure loans in the English money market. As an inevitable result of such a state of affairs there was much poverty and gloomy dissatisfaction among the people. The Opposition erelong began to advocate the adoption of "a broad National Policy," which, while affording protection to our manufacturing and agricultural interests, might also furnish a sufficient revenue for conducting the business of the country, and for proceeding with the important public works which had become absolutely necessary.* The advocates of this policy carefully abstained from any strict definition of its terms, but they claimed on its behalf that it was founded on the actual needs of the country, and not on any mere theories as to the relative advantages of Protection and Free Trade. Free Trade in the abstract, however, was advocated by no one, Mr. Mackenzie himself—who was theoretically an ardent Free Trader—admitting that a revenue tariff was necessary for Canada. The times were propitious for a new departure in fiscal matters. Business was everywhere in a very depressed condition, and in some districts was almost stagnant. The advocates of the new gospel of trade made liberal promises on its behalf, and the people, who were suffering from the hard times, and who cared very little for mere theories, lent a ready ear. The Government and its adherents treated the "National Policy" as a mere party ruse, and though pressure was brought to bear upon them from many quarters, they declined to accede to the popular cry for an increased Customs tariff. During the campaign preceding the general elections of the 17th of September, 1878, the "N. P." was the great plank in the

* See Sir John Macdonald's speech in the Commons on the 10th of March, 1876.

Opposition platform. It proved marvellously effective, and when the appointed day arrived Mr. Mackenzie's Government were left in a hopeless minority.

The membership of that Government, during their term of office, had undergone numerous modifications, but the general policy had remained unchanged throughout. The country is indebted to them for much important legislation, and for many administrative reforms. The General Election Law of 1874 introduced vote by ballot and simultaneous elections, and abolished the property qualification for members. The Supreme Court Act of 1875 constituted a Supreme Court and Court of Exchequer, to have criminal and civil jurisdiction throughout the Dominion, and took away the right of appeal to England except in cases where Imperial interests are involved. An Act of the same year provided a Territorial Government for the North-West Territories independent of Manitoba, with a Lieutenant-Governor and a Council of five members. The Canada Temperance Act, the Homestead Exemption Act, the Public Accounts Audit Act—whereby the Auditor is placed beyond ministerial control—the Petition of Right Act, the Militia Act, and the Maritime Court Act are all measures of great practical utility for which, in addition to many others not enumerated, Canada is indebted to the unwearied industry and statesmanship of Mr. Mackenzie's Administration. We also owe to them certain constitutional privileges of which no trace is to be found upon the statute-book. In the Imperial instructions issued to Lord Dufferin on the 22nd of May, 1872, his Excellency was advised that if in any case he should see sufficient cause to dissent from the opinion of the majority or the whole of his Privy Council, it should be competent for him to act "in opposition to such their opinion.*" Such a doctrine as this, though well enough suited to the condition of a Crown Colony, was not to be tolerated by Canadians

* See Sessional Papers of 1875, No. 29.

who had successfully fought a long and hard battle for Responsible Government, and to whom a constitution had been granted by the British North America Act. Mr. Mackenzie opened communications with the Colonial Office on the subject, contending that the Governor-General in Council and the Parliament of Canada should owe the same duties and responsibilities to the people of Canada that the Queen, her Ministers and Parliament owe to the English people in all matters relating to internal administration; and that the powers of legislation conferred by the Act of 1867 could not and should not be fettered or impeded by any instructions from the Home Office to the Governor-General. It is due to Lord Dufferin to say that he coincided with Mr. Mackenzie's views on this subject, and that he promoted them by personal communications to the Colonial Secretary. Mr. Mackenzie's strong representations prevailed, and any one comparing the instructions issued to the present Governor-General* with those issued to Lord Dufferin and his predecessors will note a very distinct change in favour of Canadian constitutional liberty. Mr. Mackenzie's Government also bestirred themselves to obtain the recognition by the mother country of Canada's right to be represented by Canadian diplomatists in negotiations with foreign countries, where the interests involved are exclusively or principally Canadian. In compliance with this recognized right the Hon. George Brown was in 1874† appointed as joint plenipotentiary with Sir Edward Thornton to negotiate a new commercial treaty with the United States. The negotiation failed, but it was much that the principle of Canadian representation had been conceded. Again, in 1877, the Imperial Government desired to appoint an English diplomatist to represent Canadian interests on the Halifax

* See Sessional Papers of 1879, No. 14.

† In December, 1873, Mr. Brown had been appointed a member of the Senate of the Dominion.

Fishery Commission. Mr. Mackenzie, however, insisted on the right of his own Government to appoint the Commissioner. His view was deferred to, and Sir Alexander Galt was named as Canada's representative. The result was that, for the first time in our history, British interests — which in this instance were identical with our own interests—were efficiently represented, and United States diplomacy was not exercised at our expense.*

At the Centennial Exhibition held at Philadelphia in 1876 the Canadian display won great and well-deserved admiration by reason of its exceeding richness and variety. The people coöperated heartily with the Government to ensure the success of the undertaking, and the splendid advertisement thereby obtained has led to the opening of fresh markets for our native products. The Exhibition necessarily brought the people of Canada and the United States into a better knowledge of each other, and thus indirectly tended to the improvement of international relations. The same year, 1876, was also signalized by the completion and opening of the Intercolonial Railway.

The electorate having emphatically pronounced against the policy of Mr. Mackenzie's Government, as already mentioned, on the 17th of September, 1878, that Government did not await the assembling of Parliament, but tendered their resignations on the 10th of October. Sir John Macdonald was then sent for by Lord Dufferin, who speedily formed a new Administration, composed of the following members:

The Right Hon. Sir J. A. Macdonald, Premier, and Minister of the Interior.
The Hon. S. L. Tilley, Minister of Finance.
" " Alexander Campbell, Receiver-General.
" " H. L. Langevin, Postmaster-General.
" " J. C. Aikins, Secretary of State.

* *Ante*, p. 513.

The Hon. Charles Tupper, Minister of Public Works.
" " J. H. Pope, Minister of Agriculture.
" " John O'Connor, President of the Council.
" " James Macdonald, Minister of Justice.
" " L. F. R. Masson, Minister of Militia and Defence.
" " J. C. Pope, Minister of Marine and Fisheries.
" " Mackenzie Bowell, Minister of Customs.
" " L. F. G. Baby, Minister of Inland Revenue.
" " R. D. Wilmot (Speaker of the Senate), without portfolio.

In resigning the cares of office and resuming his old post of leader of the Opposition, Mr. Mackenzie took with him the respect of men of all shades of politics. His fall was due to hard times, and a misapprehension of the true state of public opinion. He was on all hands admitted to be a conscientious and just-minded man, who regarded politics not as a trade, but as a field for the exercise of statesmanship and true patriotism. His personal labours in connection with his own Department of Public Works were such as to seriously impair his health, and he has not yet entirely recovered from the unremitting strain to which his constitution was subjected during the five years of his Premiership. He continued to act as leader of the Opposition until the month of April 1880, when the Hon. Edward Blake succeeded him in that post.

The same month that witnessed the change of Government witnessed Lord Dufferin's departure from Canada. He bade adieu to our shores on the 19th of October, 1878, taking with him the strongest assurances of the esteem and hearty goodwill of the Canadian people. No previous Governor had ever won so wide a popularity among us. His great tact, flowing courtesy and kindly nature had endeared him to people of all classes, and he might truly have boasted that he left behind him thousands of persons, each of whom regarded him in the light of a warm personal friend. His subsequent career has been watched by Canadians

with an interest such as was evoked by that of none of his predecessors, and his diplomatic successes at St. Petersburg and Constantinople have been contemplated by many of us with a feeling akin to pride. During the interregnum between his departure from Canada and the arrival of his successor the administration of public affairs was committed to the hands of General Sir Patrick Macdougall, Commander of the Forces. Our present Governor-General, the Marquis of Lorne, accompanied by his royal consort, landed at Halifax on the 25th of November. It is due to his Excellency to record the fact that he has thus far enacted a somewhat difficult *rôle* with a greater measure of success than could reasonably have been expected of him.

The membership of the Government formed under the leadership of Sir John Macdonald, in the autumn of 1878, has necessarily undergone many changes, but the Administration as a whole still remains at the head of affairs. A marked improvement in the state of trade may be said to have begun almost simultaneously with its accession to power, and this has been followed by an era of public confidence and prosperity unexampled in our history. During the session of 1879 the National Policy was carried into effect by the adoption of a strongly protective tariff, whereby increased duties were imposed upon nearly all articles of commerce. On certain staple commodities, such as cottons, woollens and sugars, a specific as well as an *ad valorem* duty was imposed, so that their cost was very materially increased. On many articles the duty was increased from 17½ to 25, and in some cases to 35 per cent., and on all unenumerated goods the duty was placed at 20 per cent. instead of 17½. The importation for several months prior to the 15th of March, 1879 (at which date the new tariff came into operation), was immense, insomuch that the local market was overstocked with many commodities throughout the rest of the year. The effect of the increased sugar duties was felt almost at once. Those imposed on cotton and woollen fabrics did not declare them-

selves unmistakably for several months; but before the end of 1879 the effect of the new tariff was felt in all its branches. How far the country's prosperity is fairly attributable to the adoption of the N. P. is a matter as to which there is wide diversity of opinion among opposing schools of politicians. Bounteous harvests at home, improved markets abroad, and various other factors altogether unconnected with legislation, have doubtless had a share in producing the improved state of affairs, but the general public are more readily influenced by direct and obvious results than by remote and undemonstrated causes. The great facts remain: that under Mr. Mackenzie's *régime* trade was depressed, money was scarce, poverty was rife and the prospect was gloomy; whereas under the present Administration business of all kinds is brisk, money is plentiful and easily obtained, poverty is comparatively unknown, and the outlook, commercially and otherwise, is decidedly hopeful. Such facts as these speak more eloquently to the public ear than any theories about Protection and Free Trade, the ebb and flow of commerce, or the variations of agriculture. At the general election held on the 20th of June, 1882, the electorate once more pronounced strongly in favour of Sir John Macdonald's Government, and, so far as can at present be judged, that Government seems destined to a long lease of life. The four years which have elapsed since they succeeded to power have been marked by many important events, conspicuous among which may be mentioned the adoption of the new tariff, the dismissal of Lieutenant-Governor Letellier, and the new contract for the construction of the Pacific Railway. During the same period many prominent Canadians who have figured in the foregoing narrative have passed away. The necrology includes the names of R. S. M. Bouchette, L. S. Morin, T. L. Terrill, E. B. Chandler, L. H. Holton, L. A. Wilmot, Luc Letellier, Christopher Dunkin, Charles Fisher, David Christie, George Brown and Egerton Ryerson. The immigration to the North-West has been unprecedentedly large, and has been followed

by a corresponding increase in the price of real estate there. A new census has been taken, from which it appears that the entire population of the Dominion is 4,324,810.* The construction of the Pacific Railway is proceeding at a rapid rate, and it would seem that the time is not far distant when Halifax and Victoria will be brought nearer to each other than Montreal and Kingston were in the early years of the present century.

At the present time, then, Canada is enjoying a full share of prosperity. The outlook, though not unclouded, is far from discouraging. Questions such as that now pending with respect to the Ontario Boundary may from time to time give rise to internal disputes, but there is no reason to anticipate that such disputes will prove impossible of adjustment. If it cannot be maintained that Confederation has accomplished all that was expected from it by its projectors, there is at any rate no doubt that it has been attended with highly beneficial results. It enabled us to tide over an embarrassing crisis in our history. It has been the means of developing our resources, and of stimulating our trade and manufactures. It has given birth to impulses which have rapidly developed themselves into aspirations after a national existence. The new order of things had not been launched many years before a little party sprang into being having for its avowed object the fostering of a Canadian national spirit. It was chiefly composed of young men, all of whom were possessed of intelligence, learning, and general abilities far above the average It formulated no elaborate policy, and gave no hint of any severance of the connection with the mother country, but it advocated the consideration of Canadian interests in preference to all others, and adopted the significant motto of "Canada First." The character of its adherents gave it an importance to which it would not have been entitled by reason of

* Made up as follows: Ontario, 1,923,228; Quebec, 1,359,027; Nova Scotia, 440,572; New Brunswick, 321,233; Manitoba, 65,954; British Columbia, 49,459; Prince Edward Island, 108,891; the Territories, 56,446.

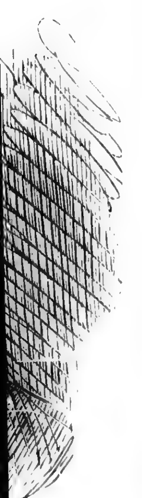
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its mere numerical strength. A weekly paper called *The Nation* was founded at Toronto under its auspices, and was conducted with great ability, so far as the editorial department was concerned, for several years. But there appears to have been no attempt at concerted organization, and it was discouraged by both the great political parties of the land; so that erelong the "Canada First" movement died out. The seed, however, had been sown, and a national spirit has ever since been abroad in the land, more especially among the young men: the generation to whose hands the future destinies of Canada must inevitably be committed. Upon one subject all thinking men are agreed: the relations at present existing between Canada and Great Britain are not destined to be permanent. Some modification in those relations is inevitable. Many years may possibly elapse ere it shall become necessary to take the question into practical consideration, but that such a time *will* come is no longer disputable. It seems to be admitted on all hands that the problem will be solved in one of three ways: by a general federation of the British Empire; by the annexation of Canada to the United States; or by the establishment of Canadian independence. The first-named project is commonly regarded as impracticable, though it has powerful advocates on both sides of the Atlantic, including Justin McCarthy in England and Edward Blake in Canada. With respect to annexation, the idea has never found much acceptance in Canada. Even in 1849, when the movement reached its height, it was for the most part confined to a portion of the mercantile community of Montreal and some of the larger towns.* From that time down to the present, the idea of annexation cannot be said to have obtained any foothold whatever among us. To the institutions of the United States, whether political or social, Canadians generally entertain a strong aversion. The idea of independence, on the other hand, appears to have taken a toler-

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* *Ante*, pp. 180-183.

ably firm hold of the mind of Young Canada. The rapid development of the North-West which has taken place of late years has undoubtedly done much to encourage this idea. We have become alive to the fact that our resources are almost boundless. Our enlarged capabilities have become apparent to us, and have begotten enlarged desires for national freedom: freedom to legislate for ourselves without reference to Ministers who are imperfectly informed as to our needs; freedom to negotiate treaties which primarily concern ourselves. Though we have as yet had no very bitter experiences of the evils of living in a state of dependence, the day of trial is certain to arrive sooner or later. Though we enjoy a large measure of self-government, our laws are subject to disallowance by Imperial Ministers who have no responsibility to us, and who are wholly beyond our influence or control. No reader of the foregoing pages needs to be informed that we have lost heavily by our inability to make treaties with foreign nations as to matters affecting our own welfare. It is tolerably certain that whenever we may wish to cut the tie that binds us to the mother country we shall be permitted to do so without opposition. This, it would seem, is likely to be our true "ultimate destiny," and not that other undesired and undesirable fate which has commonly been predicted for us in connection with the phrase.

With nations, as with individuals, their future is largely in their own keeping. "Let each of us have faith in the rest, and cultivate a broad feeling of regard for mutual welfare," says one of our own writers. "Thus stimulated and thus strengthened by a common belief in a glorious future, and with a common watchword to give unity to thought and power to endeavour, we shall attain the fruition of our cherished hopes, and give our beloved country a proud position among the nations of the earth."*

* *Canada First; or, Our New Nationality;* by W. A. Foster; p. 36.



CHAPTER XLII.

LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM.

"It must be admitted that Canada has not yet produced any works which show a marked originality of thought. Some humorous writings, a few good poems, one or two histories, some scientific and constitutional productions, are alone known to a small reading public outside of Canada. Striking originality can hardly be developed to any great extent in a dependency which naturally, and perhaps wisely in some cases, looks for all its traditions and habits of thought to a parent state. It is only with an older condition of society, when men have learned at last to think as well as to act for themselves, to originate rather than to reproduce, that there can be a national literature."—J. G. BOURINOT. *The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People*, pp. 116, 117.

HE pages still left at the writer's disposal are too few in number to admit of his entering into anything like minute or exhaustive details respecting the Canadian literature and journalism of the last forty years. The subject, however, is not a very large one, and may be glanced at in all its bearings, even within the restricted limits that can be assigned to it. It may be premised at the outset that, to speak with absolute precision, Canada has no distinctive literature or journalism of her own. We have a few tolerably good writers, and a very few eminently capable journalists, but in no essential particular can either the one or the other be said to be distinctively Canadian productions. A purely national literature is a commodity requiring age and wealth for its development. Of wealth Canada has little. Of age she has, strictly speaking, none at all, for, in a national sense, she has not yet been born.

With the advent of Confederation some faint simulacrum of a

national spirit began to manifest itself among us, and in matters political we have certainly made considerable progress during the fifteen years which have elapsed since the Dominion was ushered into existence. The "Canada First" ebullition* seemed to give promise of a national birth in literature as well as in politics, but the movement died out, and its adherents found more prosaic fields for the exercise of their talents. The truth is plain. No people ever developed a national literature so long as they remained in leading strings, and Canada must not expect to form an exception. This is no far-fetched aphorism, but a simple statement of a fact which arises from the very nature of things. It does not by any means follow that a national literature is a thing so greatly to be desired that its acquisition should become a primary object with us, or that we should sever our connection with the mother country for the mere purpose of obtaining it. A national literature will inevitably come to us in good time, along with other desirable things; and until then we can very well contrive to make shift without it.

It is encouraging to note, however, that while our literature and journalism do not smack so essentially of our Canadian soil as to be spoken of as distinctively home productions, there has of late years been a very perceptible advance in the character of both. It is not that we have originated anything new, but that we have greatly improved upon our former weak and slavish imitations of the old. At the present day we have in our midst several authors—their name is not legion, but they have an actual potential existence—who have received their educational training solely in Canadian schools, whose experience of life has been gained solely on Canadian ground, whose aspirations do not extend beyond our own boundaries, and who nevertheless can so write the English language that no monthly or quarterly reviewer need blush to acknowledge the product as his

* *Ante*, pp. 552, 553.

own. Better still, we have among us a goodly number of writers who realize the high responsibilities of their calling, and who, while they may not express themselves with the purity and grace of skilled philologists, can yet write with a straightforward clearness and power of expression which after all are the primary requisites of successful authorship. The mere Della Cruscans of literature find small favour with Canadian readers, and the professional writer who has really no message to deliver to the world must not expect to find an appreciative audience among us. Much will be forgiven to his manner of delivery if his message be in itself worth the hearing, but if the message be *vox et prœterea nihil*, the practical mind of the Canadian reader is exceedingly quick to detect its hollowness. And as this critical faculty has been almost entirely developed within the last few years it furnishes unanswerable evidence of the growth of the intellectual spirit among us. There is of course abundant room for further growth, but the plant is itself healthy, and the soil is not unfruitful. It is unwise, either for nations or individuals, to overrate their possessions, but neither is it well to despise such of them as have a real value; and though Canada has nothing of an intellectual nature to exalt her above other communities, she may at any rate plead that her talent, such as it is, has not been hidden in a napkin.

Some account of the intellectual condition of the two Provinces at the time of the Union of 1841 has been given in an earlier portion of the present work.* The Union had a decidedly stimulating effect alike upon the intellectual and the political condition of the people; but for many years the intellectual was almost entirely subservient to the political development. The people were too busily occupied in fighting the battle of Responsible Government, and in accommodating themselves to the new order of things, to bestow much thought upon literary effort. Whatever literary activity was to be

* *Ante*, Chap. III.

found in our midst exhibited itself in contributions to the ephemeral magazines of the time, and in the production of political pamphlets on the moving questions of the day—such brochures as Dr. Ryerson's defence of Sir Charles Metcalfe, and the trenchant letters of "Legion."* But by steady degrees there grew up in Canada an educational system unsurpassed by that of any country in the world. Its fruits were not very apparent during the first generation, but the seed was sown, and though the crop is as yet far from mature, it affords evidence of judicious tillage in the past, and holds out the hope of a not unproductive harvest in the future.

The best literary efforts of the Canadian mind, during the period under review, have been made in the department of history. And yet the number of writers who have achieved success in that line is small, and the current year finds us unprovided with any general history of our country that is worthy of the name. With all its faults—and they are neither few nor far between—the best historical work of home production is the "Histoire du Canada" of François Xavier Garneau, which has been made widely known to English readers through the not very accurate translation of Mr. Andrew Bell. It covers the whole period of Canadian history from the discovery of the country down to the Union which forms the starting-point of the present narrative. Its production extended over nearly a quarter of a century, and the work, as it stands, is a perennial monument of the author's patriotism, industry, and literary skill. Being written from a French Canadian point of view, it contains many passages with which English readers will find it impossible to sympathize, and there are pages which the author, were he living at the present day, would doubtless consider it his duty to cancel. Scattered here and there throughout the work are fragments of peculiarly French rhetoric, wherein the writer has flung his very heart upon his page. There is however no intentional or conscious misrepre-

* *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 361, 362.

sentation, and there is an evident appreciation of the philosophic spirit in which history should be written, although the author's sympathies are at times too strong for his philosophy. The work displays great research, and is written in a vigorous and attractive, though somewhat exuberant style. It may be said to have taken its place, both at home and abroad, as a standard publication, having been received with favour by the press of two continents, and having been quoted with approval by some of the leading historians. Mr. Garneau also wrote a number of fugitive poems which have found acceptance among his compatriots.

To a French Canadian, then, belongs the credit of having produced the best history of Canada down to the time of the Union. To a French Canadian source, also, do we owe what is beyond all comparison the best history of the period between the Union of 1841 and the Confederation of 1867. The "Canada Sous l'Union" of Louis P. Turcotte, though it makes little pretence to elaboration or loftiness of style, is a clear, succinct, and upon the whole careful and accurate account of the period whereof it treats. Like the "Histoire" of Mr. Garneau, it is written from a Lower Canadian point of view, and to that extent is not fully adapted to meet the requirements of the English-speaking population of the country; but this may almost be regarded as a necessary incident to any general history of the Province written, as this was, while Confederation was yet in its infancy, and while the bitter struggles of the past were fresh in the public memory. Some of the estimates of men and things are partial, and wanting in historic discrimination, but there has been no perversion of facts, and very little positive error of statement. When the amount of diligent research which must have gone to the preparation of the work is taken into consideration, one cannot help wondering that so few errors should have crept in; and no one can appreciate this general trustworthiness so fully as one who has laboriously travelled over the same ground. No translation

of the book has ever appeared. Sir Francis Hincks once contemplated publishing a translation of it, with copious notes and emendations from his own pen; a design which was frustrated by the untimely death of the author, who was to have coöperated with the translator by issuing a new and revised edition.

Benjamin Sulte is yet another French Canadian who has achieved an honourable distinction by his contributions to the historical literature of Canada. His distinction has been fairly earned. He is one of the really representative literary men of his native Province, having been for some years before the public in the triple *rôle* of poet, historian, and journalist. Mr. Sulte, who now occupies a position in the public service at Ottawa, is a native of the classic old town of Three Rivers, where he some years ago founded a Literary Institute over which he himself for a time presided. His earliest laurels were gathered in the field of poetry, and he has published several volumes which not only display his ability to write graceful and elegant verse, but are indicative of genuine poetic inspiration. He has written a scholarly and elaborate history of his native place, and has contributed numerous important papers on literary and historical subjects to the periodical press. He is at the present time engaged upon a "Histoire des Canadiens Français," which is appearing in serial form. The portion already published has been pronounced by competent judges who have seen it to be a mine of historic learning and research.

The historical treatises of the Abbé Ferland and F. M. U. M. Bibaud also belong to this period. The best known of the Abbé's writings is the "Cours d'Histoire du Canada," which refers to the period before the Conquest. The author's sudden death in 1864 prevented him from completing this work, which was largely founded upon his lectures in Laval University, where he was Professor of Canadian and American History. It is considered the most impartial of all histories of the period which have been

written and published in Canada in the French language, and, while its colouring is unmistakably French, it deals with facts in a more tolerant spirit than might have been expected from an ecclesiastic, writing upon subjects very near to his heart, and wherein his articles of faith were more or less intimately involved. Mr. Bibaud has produced a number of books bearing upon different periods of Canadian history, all of which enjoy a fair share of popularity in his native Province; and he has also been a diligent contributor to periodical literature. To the Abbé Casgrain and Hector Fabre we owe interesting monographs on various historical and other topics. The former is known beyond our own boundaries as a critic on historical subjects. Mr. Parkman has more than once admitted his indebtedness to him, and less conscientious writers have freely availed themselves of his labours without acknowledgment.

The Abbé Faillon's "Histoire de la Colonie Française en Canada," of which three sumptuous volumes have been issued, contains much recondite material relating to the early history of Montreal. The author, who was a Sulpician priest of that city, devoted many years of his life to the preparation of this work, which was intended to consist of ten volumes. He is understood to have completed the manuscript several years before his death, which occurred at Paris, France, in 1871; but it is said that his ecclesiastical superiors put a veto upon the publication of the additional portion. However that may have been, the other seven volumes have not yet seen the light, and the work, so far as the public are concerned, remains a mere torso, as the three published volumes bring the narrative down to 1672 only.

Turning to the English-speaking Provinces, we find no writer who has produced a general history of Canada worthy of comparison with the best of those already enumerated. The first place is due to the well-known work of John MacMullen, of Brockville, the last edition of which, published in 1868, covers the entire period prior to Confederation. Mr. MacMullen is evidently a man of great indus-

try and intelligence, tolerant in his opinions, and honestly desirous of telling the truth. Under favourable circumstances he would probably have produced a history adequate to the present requirements of the Canadian people. But his work seems to have been prepared at Brockville, where, as Sir Francis Hincks observes, " he could not have had access to a good library," * and where he was subject to the perpetual worries and interruptions inseparable from the editorship of a newspaper. As a necessary consequence he had no means of adequately verifying his facts, and was compelled to take a great deal upon trust. In the preparation of some of the later chapters he appears to have depended largely upon memory and hearsay. Still, after all deductions have been made, his work as a whole is the result of long and arduous labour, and it has some claims to be considered an original production. The four or five smaller histories which have been published since its appearance are little more than compilations from it; and unfortunately these compilations have in most cases been made by persons too indolent or too incapable to perform their task with discretion. Mr. MacMullen's errors, spread out over a large surface, are bad enough; but when compressed within the narrow limits of a school-book they are in the highest degree glaring and mischievous. In the much more voluminous work published under the direction of Mr. Charles R. Tuttle, the editor very modestly—and withal very properly—lays no claim to the title of historian. In the preface to the first volume he expressly disclaims having attempted anything beyond the arrangement in convenient form of " the products of previous research." The second volume, which embraces the history of the country since Confederation, is written with much amplitude of detail, and contains a vast amount of useful information; but it bears internal evidence of having been prepared by different hands, and of having been passed through the press without proper editorial supervision. It seems

* See "The Political History of Canada," p. 85.

absurd to suppose that a book of such a nature could have been issued to the world without the interposition of a proof-reader, but if any such functionary was employed upon it he was certainly very inefficient in his profession, and he as certainly knew very little about the subject-matter of his labours. The work is still incomplete, but its continuation is understood to have been abandoned. Its value is materially lessened by the absence of an index—a remark which is also applicable to Mr. MacMullen's work, and indeed to nearly all histories of Canada.

A smaller popular history of our country, prepared by the Rev. W. H. Withrow, and profusely illustrated with wood engravings, was published several years ago. It was essentially a "popular" history, and made no pretence to be a work of original research. Notwithstanding that many errors of former authors remained uncorrected in its pages, it was a step in advance of most of the small compilations, and doubtless served a good public purpose. A new revised edition, brought down to the present time, is now in course of publication. Dr. Henry H. Miles, formerly Vice-Principal of Bishop's College, Lennoxville, is the author of a "History of Canada Under the French Régime," published at Montreal in 1872. It enjoys the repute of being a careful and trustworthy compilation, and is favourably known to historical students all over the Dominion.

In addition to the general histories, we have had a good many works relating to the history of different portions of our country, and nearly all the Provinces have been made the subject of separate treatises. The most important of these is Christie's "History of the Late Province of Lower Canada," in six volumes, which has been referred to in connection with the Parliamentary career of its author.* It contains a great mass of valuable material for history, but its serious defects of style and its want of orderly arrangement have combined to prevent it from obtaining general popularity ;

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 95.

while the absence of an index to such an undigested and heterogeneous compendium seriously interferes with its usefulness for purposes of reference. A similar judgment must be passed upon the labours of Dr. Canniff, who, in his "History of the Settlement of Upper Canada, with Special Reference to the Bay Quinté," has got together many valuable data which some skilled literary workman will doubtless one day turn to account. Beamish Murdoch's "History of Nova Scotia," in three volumes, is another collection of annals which must prove of inestimable value to the future historian. "Nova Scotia, in its Historical, Mercantile and Industrial Relations," by Duncan Campbell, is a more popular treatise, containing within the compass of a medium-sized octavo volume a history of the Province down to the year 1873. The same author has given us in a smaller volume a "History of Prince Edward Island," wherein is embodied a concise history of that Province, from the period when it became a British possession until its entry into the Union in 1873. James Hannay's "History of Acadia," published in 1879, is a genuine contribution to the historical literature of the Maritime Provinces, and deserves a larger measure of success than it appears to have met with. While it contains little or nothing that is new to diligent students of our early annals, it places in a popular shape much that has hitherto been unseen by the eye of the general reader, and dispels more than one hallowed tradition of the past. Read in the light of Mr. Hannay's pages, the sweet, tender story of Evangeline loses much of the pathos with which the genius of Longfellow invested it more than thirty years ago. The sad tale has drawn tears from many eyes all unused to the melting mood, and in a purely æsthetic sense one can scarcely feel thankful to those who destroy, one by one, the fondly-treasured idols of his childhood. But truth is truth, and this touching "Tale of Acadie" must take its place side by side with that of William Tell and many another cherished delusion of a less critical age. Mr. Hannay was not the first to give currency to the true historical narrative, but he

was the first to place it in a popular shape before the general Canadian reader, and to this extent he has rendered a service which is deserving of the fullest recognition.

D'Arcy McGee's "Popular History of Ireland" can hardly be accounted as a Canadian production, although the greater part of it was written during the author's residence among us. A work by the late Judge Marshall, of Nova Scotia, entitled "A Brief History of Public Proceedings and Events, Legal, Parliamentary and Miscellaneous, in the Province of Nova Scotia, during the Earliest Years of the Present Century," is noteworthy as being a record prepared to a large extent from personal recollection. It appeared so recently as 1879, when the author—who survived its publication only a few months—had attained to the patriarchal age of ninety-two years. The Province of Manitoba has also found an historian in the late Hon. Donald Gunn, whose work, with a continuation by C. R. Tuttle, was published about two years since. The Hon. Alexander Morris about the same time issued a further contribution to the literature of the North-West, entitled "The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories." It gives an account of all the treaties with those Indians, from the original one made with Lord Selkirk down to the last, made under the auspices of Mr. Morris himself. It may be mentioned that Mr. Morris long since attracted some attention as an author by two essays respectively entitled "Canada and Her Resources," and "Nova Britannia." To the former, which appeared in 1855, was awarded the second prize offered by the Paris Exhibition Committee of Canada; the first prize being awarded to the well-known essay by John Sheridan Hogan. In "Nova Britannia," which was a reproduction of a lecture delivered in 1858, before the Mercantile Library Association of Montreal, the author predicted the federation of the British American Provinces and the construction of the Intercolonial and Pacific Railways.

A good many works relating to particular epochs in our history have been published in Canada during the period under review. The list includes three different accounts of the War of 1812. The first in point of time was by Major Richardson, a gentleman who contrived to make a good deal of noise in his day and generation, not only in Canada but in Europe. It is a mere fragment, as the author did not receive encouragement to issue, or even to write, more than the first part of it, extending to 182 printed pages. As the work of a participator in the events described, it is not without value, but there is no intrinsic justification for the very high prices which have been paid for it by Canadian bibliophiles within the last few years.* The account by Gilbert Auchinleck, originally published in the *Anglo-American Magazine*, and subsequently issued as a separate volume, embodies a tolerably full history of the struggle from its commencement to its close. The bare facts are generally, though not invariably, stated with accuracy. The strongest objection which can be urged against the work is that the author's ultra-British prejudices rendered him too violent a partisan to admit of his seeing the question in any aspect but one. The period from 1812 to 1815, more than any other in our annals, offers strong temptations to the historian to overstep the bounds of strict judicial impartiality. Lieutenant-Colonel William Foster Coffin, to whom we owe the latest account, published in 1864, has not been altogether proof against the pitfalls in his path, though his sins of commission are less glaring than those of Mr. Auchinleck, and his narrative is more lively and readable. This work is also incomplete, the history being brought down only so far as the close of 1813.

The late Dr. Egerton Ryerson, not long before his death, gave us

* "Eight Years in Canada," by the same author—a work several times quoted from in former pages of this work—is also valuable to the student of our history, but it must be used with discrimination and judgment, as the Major was far from being an impartial observer, and was to a large extent dominated by his circumstances and prejudices.

a history of "The Loyalists of America and their Times," in two octavo volumes, the preparation of which had extended over half an ordinary lifetime. The venerable Doctor was a man of extraordinary powers of mind and body. As a pulpit orator, as a polemical controversialist, and as Superintendent of Education he has left his mark upon the history of Upper Canada. His labours in the cause of education have drawn forth warm and well-merited encomiums from persons entitled to speak on such subjects with authority. But no man can be expected to do everything well, and the fact is that Dr. Ryerson did not possess the faculty of writing history. His volumes are laid out with singular want of skill, and the filling-in violates all laws of historical perspective. He seems to have been unacquainted with some of the latest authorities, and his treatment involves a perpetual violation of modern ideas as to the true mission of the historian. The work is an unsafe guide, even as to mere matters of detail, and the effect, as a whole, is far from satisfactory. The authorship will ensure for the volumes a continuous reception far more than commensurate with their merits; but the volumes themselves will fail to give posterity any just estimate of the great intellectual vigour of this, the most distinguished member of a deservedly distinguished family.

Colonel Gray's "Confederation," already referred to in the historical part of this narrative, adds one more to the list of unfinished works on Canadian history. Up to the present time only the first volume has appeared. It was published in 1872, and the author evidently contemplated the issue of a second and concluding volume. It is to be regretted that he was not encouraged to carry out his design, for his book, as far as it goes, is a valuable record of events which must have a material bearing upon our polity for many a year to come, if not for all time. Huyshe's "Red River Expedition," and Begg's "Creation of Manitoba" are as accurate records of those passages in our history as can reasonably be expected from brief and almost contemporaneous accounts. The

more recent work of Professor Bryce, entitled "Manitoba: its Infancy, Growth and Present Condition," contains much valuable and interesting information with reference to the early explorers of the North-West; and it is especially noteworthy as containing the fullest account that has yet appeared of the life and labours of that large-minded nobleman, Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk.

In 1878 appeared "Canada Under the Administration of the Earl of Dufferin," by George Stewart, Jr., one of the best known and most popular of all our writers. Though he can hardly be said to have passed the first approaches of middle age, Mr. Stewart has already won a high and honourable position in the Canadian world of letters, and, like Lucullus, he owes his rank "to no man but himself." He has been before the public for at least fifteen years, and his writings show a steady advance, not only in mere literary form, but in self-reliance and mental grasp. His literary and journalistic labours will be referred to later on. As a historian he claims attention by virtue of the work above mentioned, which was produced during the author's tenure of office as editor of a Toronto monthly magazine. The history of Lord Dufferin's Administration is here recounted with much minuteness of detail, and the important constitutional questions involved therein are discussed with calmness and impartiality. The best of the Governor's speeches delivered during his residence among us, carefully revised by himself, are included in the volume, to which they impart additional value and attractiveness. The book was well received, and has passed through two editions. A work bearing a similar title, and covering the same ground, was written by William Leggo, and published during the same year.

In the department of history, then, Canadian authors have produced a few works of real value. In the kindred branch of biography some creditable attempts have also been made. "Sketches of Celebrated Canadians and Persons connected with Canada," by Henry James Morgan, published in 1862, was for many

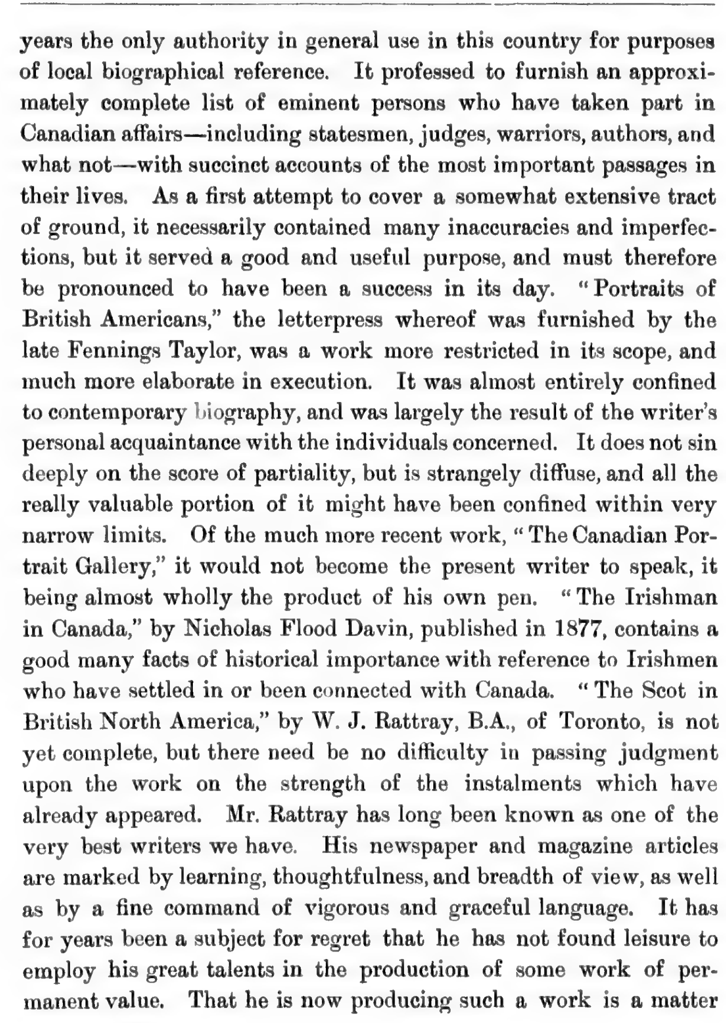
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years the only authority in general use in this country for purposes of local biographical reference. It professed to furnish an approximately complete list of eminent persons who have taken part in Canadian affairs—including statesmen, judges, warriors, authors, and what not—with succinct accounts of the most important passages in their lives. As a first attempt to cover a somewhat extensive tract of ground, it necessarily contained many inaccuracies and imperfections, but it served a good and useful purpose, and must therefore be pronounced to have been a success in its day. "Portraits of British Americans," the letterpress whereof was furnished by the late Fennings Taylor, was a work more restricted in its scope, and much more elaborate in execution. It was almost entirely confined to contemporary biography, and was largely the result of the writer's personal acquaintance with the individuals concerned. It does not sin deeply on the score of partiality, but is strangely diffuse, and all the really valuable portion of it might have been confined within very narrow limits. Of the much more recent work, "The Canadian Portrait Gallery," it would not become the present writer to speak, it being almost wholly the product of his own pen. "The Irishman in Canada," by Nicholas Flood Davin, published in 1877, contains a good many facts of historical importance with reference to Irishmen who have settled in or been connected with Canada. "The Scot in British North America," by W. J. Rattray, B.A., of Toronto, is not yet complete, but there need be no difficulty in passing judgment upon the work on the strength of the instalments which have already appeared. Mr. Rattray has long been known as one of the very best writers we have. His newspaper and magazine articles are marked by learning, thoughtfulness, and breadth of view, as well as by a fine command of vigorous and graceful language. It has for years been a subject for regret that he has not found leisure to employ his great talents in the production of some work of permanent value. That he is now producing such a work is a matter

as to which there can be no difference of opinion. It must at the same time be confessed that the three volumes hitherto published leave upon the reader's mind an impression that the author has not here given us of his best: that he has not, in fact, chosen a field in which his high attainments show to their full advantage. His narrative is interesting, and written in good English. His generous enthusiasm, his constant desire to be rigidly impartial, his skilful avoidance of repetition and his general literary skill are worthy of all praise. But Mr. Rattray has evidently not imposed upon himself the labour of hard and minute investigation. He has sometimes followed untrustworthy authorities, and has thus been led into errors which even the exigencies of his arduous journalistic pursuits are barely sufficient to account for. His kindly nature, moreover, impels him to refrain from saying unpleasant things, even when Muse Clio imperatively demands plainness of language at his hands. These are the sole defects which an appreciative critic has to charge upon what is in other respects a most meritorious and valuable work. And the defects, after all, apply to but a very small proportion of the sum total. If Mr. Rattray were a mere literary hack his occasional lapses would not have been deemed worthy of notice, but his workmanship is generally of so excellent a quality that it behoves him to carefully guard his reputation. He has evidently been cramped by the exigency of serial publication—a disadvantage with which the writer of the present work can sincerely sympathize.

A quasi-biographical work, in five volumes, entitled "Case and his Contemporaries," by the Rev. John Carroll, contains a good deal of matter which may not inaptly be termed "history in the rough." The most noteworthy collection of biographies produced in the French language in Canada, during the period with which this review is concerned, is "Les Canadiens de l'Ouest," by Joseph Tassé, M.P., published in 1879. It gives an account of the exploits of Langlade, Dubuque, and other pioneers of the Great West, and is embellished

with authentic portraits. It is said to display great research and industry, but as the present writer has not seen it he can only pronounce upon it at second-hand.

The careful biographical studies of John Foster Kirk, a native of New Brunswick, have gained for him a high and wide reputation, but we are hardly entitled to claim him for our own, as he is by settlement and predilection a citizen of the United States, and has achieved all his successes there. The most important separate biography published in Canada during the last forty years is Mr. Charles Lindsey's "Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie," which appeared in 1862. It was prepared chiefly from materials which had been collected by Mr. Mackenzie himself with a view to an autobiography, and was as full and accurate as was reasonably to be expected from a work written within a twelvemonth after that gentleman's death. Since then, however, a great deal of additional light has been thrown upon Mr. Mackenzie's career in its relation to Canadian affairs, and there is undoubtedly an opening for a new work on the subject. No one is in so favourable a position to undertake such an enterprise as Mr. Lindsey, and it is to be hoped that he may erelong see his way to issuing a new and enlarged edition of his former biography. To the same author we owe an account of the Clergy Reserves, published in 1851; "Rome in Canada," in 1877; and a work on the boundaries of Ontario, in 1873. Another work on the last-named subject, written by Mr. David Mills, was also published in 1873.

A number of historico-topographical works, some of which are of considerable value, have from time to time been produced among us. "Canada: Past, Present and Future," by William H. Smith, published in 1851, was a useful work in its day, as was also the same author's "Canadian Gazetteer," issued in 1846. Coming down to more recent times, the history and topography of Toronto and Quebec have been delineated with loving hands by Dr. Scadding and Mr. J. M. Lemoine. The latter has also published "Chronicles of

the St. Lawrence," and a miniature library of other works bearing on the history and traditions of Lower Canada. "Red River," by Joseph James Hargrave, gives a great deal of interesting and pleasantly-conveyed information respecting the settlement to which it refers. Mr. James Young, well-known in connection with journalism and Parliamentary life in Ontario, has given us a readable little volume embodying "Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt, and the settlement of Dumfries;" and the Counties of Leeds and Grenville have found a local historian in Mr. T. W. H. Leavitt.

"A History of Cavalry, from the Earliest Times, with Lessons for the Future," by Lieutenant-Colonel George T. Denison, of Toronto, is a work of which the author especially, and Canadians generally, have abundant reason to feel proud. The circumstances under which it came to be written are worth recording. In 1874 the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia, with the Czar's sanction, offered three prizes for the best three books on the history of the cavalry service—a subject which up to that time had never found a historian. The competition was declared open to the whole world, and Colonel Denison entered himself for the race. "I felt," said he, "that it was my duty to take advantage of the opening, and to show that it was possible for a native-born Canadian—an officer of the militia of this country—to hold his own with the officers of any force in the world."* He had some years before gained considerable reputation by a work entitled "Modern Cavalry: its Organization, Armament and Employment in War," published in England in 1868, and since translated into the principal languages of continental Europe. But the qualifications required for the successful performance of such a task as he now imposed upon himself were of an altogether exceptional kind. The preliminary labour was necessarily very great, and to a Canadian presented difficulties which most persons would have regarded as insuperable. Colonel

* These words were uttered by Colonel Denison in the course of a speech delivered at a banquet held in his honour at Toronto, in January, 1878.

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THE REV. MICHAEL STAFFORD.

Denison, however, set himself to his task with unflagging energy and resolution. Having written his book and obtained a translation of the manuscript into Russian, he proceeded to St. Petersburg, where he had the proud satisfaction of snatching the prize from all competitors, and of being received with honour at one of the most splendid courts in Europe. His history was issued in costly form by one of the foremost of English publishing houses. It has since been translated into several European languages, and has established the author's reputation throughout the world as a writer on military affairs.

In works relating to the constitution, Canada has produced several writers who have proved themselves capable of discussing grave questions of polity with intelligence; and she can boast of one writer who has made his mark upon the constitutional literature of the English language. Dr. Alpheus Todd's "Parliamentary Government in England," and "Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies" have taken their due rank among the foremost authorities of the age upon the subjects to which they refer. They are the carefully-evolved product of a well-ordered mind; a mind richly stored with such knowledge as can only be acquired by long and close study, and trained to contemplate public questions from the calm altitude of the judgment-seat. The author's learning and industry have evoked well-merited acknowledgments from the leading organs of scholarly opinion in Great Britain, and his books are held in respect at Westminster no less than at Ottawa. "The Constitution of Canada," by Joseph Doutre, Q.C., of Montreal, is a careful exposition of the British North America Act of 1867, with copious elucidations gathered from all available sources. Samuel James Watson's "Constitutional History of Canada," of which only one small volume had been published when the author's career was cut short by death, gave promise of being an excellent work for general use. "The Powers of Canadian Parliaments," from the same hand, is a potent plea for local as against Federal authority in



matters legislative. The other side of the question is argued by Mr. Fennings Taylor, in a little volume entitled "Are Legislatures Parliaments?" Mr. D. A. O'Sullivan, in "A Manual of Government in Canada," has also briefly discussed the principles of our Federal and Provincial constitutions.

In fiction there is no great triumph to record: no name to be placed side by side with that of Judge Haliburton, whose strongest flights, both in fiction and history, were made during a former period. Subsequent to 1841, "the Old Judge" produced several works which have taken a certain rank in literature, but they are little more than feeble echoes of "The Clockmaker." The novels of Major Richardson have frequently been referred to with high commendation, though it is difficult to understand how any writer possessed of true critical sagacity could have found anything in them to admire. The truth of the matter is that "Wacousta," "The Canadian Brothers," and "Ecarté" are very wooden affairs. As for "The Monk Knight of St. John," it is simply beneath criticism, whether regarded from a moral or a literary point of view. The author had no faculty for drawing character, and he had knocked about in barrack-rooms so long that he seemed to have lost all perception of the eternal fitness of things. Mrs. Susanna Moodie played a much more wholesome note, and several of her books, delineating the picturesque side of "Roughing it in the Bush," as well as of "Life in the Clearings," furnish both pleasant and instructive reading. Her younger sister, Mrs. Traill, also produced several volumes of tales and sketches illustrative of pioneer life in Canada. Her brother, Lieutenant-Colonel Strickland, was the author of "Twenty-Seven Years in Canada West," which was a partial record of his own adventures, and which, in strictness, has no right to be included among works of fiction. The list of readable novels by Canadian authors, indeed, is very brief. The only one produced in the English language which has any high claims to consideration is "Le Chien d'Or," by William Kirby, of Niagara: a work which con-

tains nearly all the elements of a singularly powerful romance. The author combines a weird and at times delicate fancy with a thorough knowledge of his subject, and he has conjured up the dry bones of the past with a very unusual degree of power and felicity. His lack of artistic skill in the use of his materials is probably the result of inexperience, and, if so, he lacks nothing but patience and discipline to become a successful writer of fiction. "The Bastonnais," by John Lesperance, though considerably below Mr. Kirby's level, conveys a not inapt idea of the times whereof it treats, and will repay perusal. Mrs. Leprohon's tales of Canadian life have won a wide reputation, more especially in the Lower Province, and at least one of them has been translated into French. The Rev. W. H. Withrow has also published several interesting little stories illustrative of Canadian history and every-day life. A very different style of fiction is that of the late James De Mille, somewhile Professor of History and Rhetoric in Dalhousie College, Halifax. The Professor was a man of ability and learning, who produced a work on rhetoric which is highly spoken of. His novels, however, are of the hyper-fervid class, and they are not books of which we, as Canadians, have any special reason to feel proud, though they obtained a large circulation, and were pecuniarily successful. Their success was doubtless promoted by the circumstance that they were cleverly illustrated and issued by prominent publishing houses in the United States. They are for the most part ghastly unrealities. The author had some insight into character, but was inconceivably awkward in the management of his plots, and some of his dialogues are the very acme of absurdity. Whatever was coarsely horrible had a strange fascination for him; and in reading his morbid imaginings one cannot help wondering whether they were evolved from a perfectly sound brain. Such grotesque conceptions as are to be found in "Cord and Creese," "The Living Link," "The Cryptogram," "The American Baron," and "An

Open Question" are simply suggestive of Edgar Poe, with the genius, delicacy and literary skill left out. The late Mrs. May Agnes Fleming also belonged to the Maritime Provinces. As a sensation novelist she achieved considerable pecuniary success in the United States, but the writer of these pages would be deceiving a confiding public if he were to lay claim to any personal knowledge of her writings.

Several French Canadian writers have produced noticeable works of fiction. "Charles Guérin," by the Hon. P. J. O. Chauveau, was published at Montreal in 1852. It achieved much popularity among the author's fellow-countrymen in Lower Canada, and is said to display much literary ability. "Jean Rivard," by A. Gerin-Lajoie, published in 1862, is a simple but attractive story of French Canadian life and character as exhibited in the backwoods. "L'Intendant Bigot," "François de Bienville," and "Le Chevalier de Mornac," by Joseph Marmette, are among the most popular works of contemporary French Canadian fiction. The stories of Mr. Narcisse H. E. Faucher de St. Maurice we find described as "picturesque, and so well constructed that the interest of the narrative rises in intensity to the climax."*

In poetry, much good work has been done by our French Canadian brethren. Mr. Louis Honoré Fréchette has written poems which are entitled to a permanent place in our literature, and which have already made his name known in lands where the names of our foremost statesmen are "unfamiliar quantities." "Les Fleurs Boreales" and "Les Oiseaux de Neige" have enjoyed the high honour of being crowned by the Institute of France, and several of his dramas have been successfully performed in the theatres of his native Province. His writings display an ardent imagination, chastened by culture and good taste. The poems of Benjamin Sulte, L. P. Le May and

* See a thoughtful paper on "The Intellectual Progress of Canada," by James Douglas, Jr., published in *The Canadian Monthly* for June, 1875.

the late Joseph Octave Crémazie, while they are less widely known than those of Mr. Fréchette, contain evidences of genuine inspiration, and have found an appreciative circle of readers. Several dramas by the Hon. F. G. Marchand have been successfully represented on the Quebec stage.

Among our writers of English poetry the first place has by common consent been awarded to the late Charles Heavysege, whose "Saul" was pronounced by the *North British Review* to be "indubitably one of the most remarkable English poems ever written out of Great Britain." It may seem ungracious for a Canadian writer to call in question so favourable a dictum from such a source, but since that dictum was pronounced a sufficient number of years have elapsed to admit of the formation of a maturer judgment. As compared with other poems by Canadian writers, "Saul" is certainly entitled to stand on a pedestal of its own. It contains a number of fine passages, some of which are absolutely startling by reason of the splendour of their imagery and their odd incongruity of thought. The writer's capacity for rude conception is beyond dispute. But, if the truth must be told, his knowledge and powers were altogether inadequate to his theme. Notwithstanding his aptitude for producing startling effects, his genius seems to have been essentially imitative. His imagination was rough and undisciplined, and he was too ready to mistake mere violence of epithet for intensity of force. Some of the most enthusiastic of his critics, taken aback by his peculiarities of style, took him for a great painter because he used a large brush. Genius he certainly possessed. Training and culture would doubtless have done much for him; but it is very doubtful whether he had even any clear conception of that "great poetic heart" which the Laureate assures us is "more than all poetic fame." He was not in sympathy with his age, which is too busy to occupy itself with the study of epic poems, even when they come from the hand of an acknowledged master. "Saul,"

in a word, was caviare to the general. "Jephthah's Daughter" was an advance in point of mere execution, but it lacked the "forceful might" which gave a special character to the former production. The author also wrote a novel called "The Advocate," which displays on a lower scale the same qualities as his poetry. Strength is there, but it is the strength of an untrained athlete, who knows not how to use his powers. In all his writings there are evidences of his fondness for Shakspeare, Milton and the Bible—models which could not well be improved upon—but it seems to have been the fondness of the enthusiast rather than that of the critic. Take him for all and all, while his right to the first place among Canadian poets is not to be disputed, it is not fair either to himself or to his poetical brethren to measure him by the false standard of the *North British Review.*

Thomas D'Arcy McGee gave to the world a number of poems, many of them on Canadian subjects, but the author had no sufficient opportunity to steadfastly court the poetic Muse, and though some of his effusions display brilliant flashes of inspiration, they are the mere casual ebullitions of his spare hours. Another Irish Canadian, the late Samuel James Watson, whose "Constitutional History" was referred to several pages back, wrote poems and dramas exhibiting a high degree of poetic feeling. Charles Sangster has sung sweetly and well of the woods and streams of his native land. John Reade, literary editor of the Montreal *Gazette,* has given us some scholarly translations from Homer, and has also contributed melodious original verse to the various magazines. Alexander McLachlan, Charles Mair, Evan McColl, and Charles Pelham Mulvany are all entitled to honoured places among the sweet singers of Canada. The verses of the last-named writer are of very unequal merit, but some of his fugitive pieces, contributed during the last year or two to the Toronto periodicals, display a very unusual degree of literary and poetic ability.

Bibliography is a plant which does not commonly flourish on a new soil, but we have several very creditable works in that department. The well-known "Catalogue" of George Barthélemi Faribault was published in 1837, and therefore does not come within our purview; but the "Bibliotheca Canadensis" of Mr. Morgan, published at Ottawa in 1867, is well entitled to a word of praise. It has proved an inestimable boon to literary men and journalists throughout the land, and it is to be hoped that the author may carry out his present design of issuing a new and enlarged edition. The "Histoire de la Littérature Canadienne" by Edmond Lareau, and "Selections from the Canadian Poets," by the Rev. Edward Hartley Dewart, are both useful works, and will be indispensable to the future historian of our literature. In the domain of metaphysics, "Man's Moral Nature," by Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, is a noticeable work, to which it is impossible to do justice in a casual general review like the present. In art, a serial work entitled "Picturesque Canada," now in course of publication under the editorship of Principal Grant, of Kingston, is far in advance of anything of the kind hitherto attempted in Canada.

In science we have at least two names entitled to be placed beside those of the distinguished savants of the old world. The late Sir William Logan's reputation as a geologist is confined to no country. Dr. Dawson's works, as has been said elsewhere, have "opened up new fields of thought in districts that once were barren," and have won respect for the author from persons who "know nothing of Canada beyond the fact that it is the abode of Professor Dawson."* The names of Hind, Hunt, Vennor, Bell, Macoun, Chapman, Fleming and Wilson all suggest themselves as belonging to earnest inquirers who have made more or less extended excursions into various regions of "the fairy land of science." Dr.

* *Canadian Portrait Gallery*, Vol. II., p. 133.

Wilson has also produced several literary works which show the result of careful study and earnest thought. In theology the writings of Bishop Medley and Dr. Bovell are to some extent known to learned divines in all parts of the English-speaking world. In law and medicine we have had several writers whose works furnish indisputable evidences of industry and learning. Dr. Adamson, Paul Kane, and the Rev. G. M. Grant have given us pleasant descriptions of Canadian scenery and travel. The Rev. W. H. Withrow has supplied the best popular contribution to the literature of the Roman catacombs that has appeared in any country, and he has also produced an interesting record of a European tour. We may indeed be said to have made a fair beginning in almost every branch of literature, and if we have no special reason to congratulate ourselves, we have certainly nothing to be ashamed of when we look back upon our achievements of the present and past generations. What the recently-established Royal Society may do for us remains to be seen; but if our immediate past is to be taken as an index of our immediate future, we may safely count upon a productive literary period during the next two decades of our existence.

The magazine literature of Canada has naturally had a good deal of influence in moulding our literary thought. The *Anglo-American Magazine,* established in Toronto about thirty years ago by Thomas Maclear, was a creditable attempt to furnish Canadian readers with the best contents of the current English periodicals, together with a considerable proportion of original matter by local writers. To its pages the Rev. R. J. MacGeorge contributed his "Chronicles of Dreepdaily," and the major part of the monthly *mélange* entitled "The Editor's Shanty." The venture lived for several years, but was in advance of the times, and finally died from want of support. The *British American Magazine,* founded in Toronto a few years later under the auspices of Messrs. Rollo & Adam, ran a similar course. A periodical far in advance of either of



THE REV. G. M. GRANT, PRINCIPAL OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, KINGSTON.

these was the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, begun in 1872, and continued, through varying vicissitudes of fortune, down to the summer of the current year, when it went the way of its predecessors. The competition of English and American magazines proved too formidable to be successfully encountered, and its conductors grew weary of performing a laborious and unremunerative task. As compared with any previous attempt of the sort in Canada the *Monthly* was a high-class magazine, and deserved a better fate. In its pages many readers for the first time made the acquaintance of some of our best writers. The powerful pen of Professor Goldwin Smith was enlisted in its service, and his trenchant reviews of "Current Events" exerted a most important and salutary influence upon public opinion in Canada for several years. There were native Canadian contributors with whom it was no degradation, even for such a master as Mr. Smith, to associate himself. W. D. Le Sueur's thoughtful contributions are quite up to the intellectual mark of the best English magazines. Mr. Bourinot enriched its pages by a number of articles, several of which have since been republished in book form under the title of "The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People"—a volume which has furnished more than one hint for the present chapter. Martin J. Griffin contributed carefully-written prose and graceful verse. The Rev. G. M. Grant, W. J. Rattray, Carroll Ryan, Louisa Murray, Miss Machar, and a number of other Canadian writers gave us instructive papers on a great variety of subjects. Both in the *Canadian Monthly* and elsewhere, Mr. R. W. Phipps has given us maturely-considered discourses on trade questions which have established his right to be regarded as one of the strongest and most original thinkers in the Dominion. The services of Mr. G. M. Adam in connection with this periodical are also deserving of acknowledgment. He was associated with its business management from the first number, and for several years afterwards he conducted

its publication with much taste and judgment. After an interval spent in the United States, he succeeded to the editorial chair in 1879; and his was the hand destined to write its valedictory in 1882. The *Canada Educational Monthly*, founded several years ago, is another periodical venture of Mr. Adam's. As its name imports, it is chiefly devoted to the educational interests of the country, but it from time to time contains articles of interest to reading and thinking men of all pursuits.

Belford's Magazine was established in Toronto towards the close of 1876, and was for several years a rival of the *Canadian Monthly*, by which it was finally absorbed. It was of a somewhat lighter and more popular character than the *Monthly*, and for a time bade fair to achieve a permanent and independent success. It was edited with marked ability by George Stewart, Jr., who himself contributed to its pages some of his best productions. One series of these, entitled "Evenings in a Library," was republished in a volume which had a large sale, and promoted the steady growth of the author's reputation. Upon the amalgamation of *Belford's* with the *Canadian Monthly* Mr. Stewart became editor of the latter, and so continued until his departure from Ontario in 1879, to assume the editorship of the Quebec *Chronicle*. Years before this time—in 1867—he had himself founded a periodical at St. John, New Brunswick, which attained wide popularity. It was called *Stewart's Quarterly*, and was edited with great care and ability by its proprietor. Its strongest feature was literary criticism, and some remarkably brilliant reviews of the current literature of the time appeared in its pages. Its circulation extended to the New England States, and the manifest ability displayed upon it was the means of procuring for the editor the personal acquaintance and friendship of nearly all the most prominent writers of Boston and Cambridge. The magazine, however, did not prove permanently remunerative, and its publication ceased in 1872. For several years past Mr. Stewart

has edited the Quebec *Chronicle* with much journalistic insight and perspicacity. He is now engaged upon a life of Frontenac, for a forthcoming voluminous work on the history of America, to be published at Boston under the editorship of Mr. Justin Winsor. A still more important project that he is understood to have in contemplation is a history of the Canadian rebellion—a work for which there is an undoubted opening, and which the public would cordially welcome from his hand.

The *Bystander*, an independent review of current events, with special reference to those of our own land, was a monthly publication commenced in Toronto about three years since. The whole of the letterpress was furnished by Professor Goldwin Smith, and it was read from month to month with eager avidity by almost every Canadian having any pretensions to intellectual culture. After running a successful career for about eighteen months, its discontinuance was rendered necessary by the Professor's departure for Europe. Since his return to Canada there have been rumours as to its rehabilitation, and the announcement has recently been made that it is to be revived as a quarterly magazine at the beginning of 1883. The *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, under the editorship of the Rev. W. H. Withrow, has been in existence for some years, and is still in a flourishing condition. Though specially addressed to the Methodist community, it contains many illustrated articles of general interest, and is read by people of all classes.

In Lower Canada periodical literature has been subjected to influences similar to those which it has had to encounter in other parts of the country. Magazines have arisen, run their allotted course, and at last quietly dropped out of existence. Mr. Bourinot, in the little volume already indicated, refers in complimentary terms to *Le Repertoire National*, *Soirées Canadiennes*, and *Le Foyer Canadien*. The first-named, which was published from 1848 to 1850, is spoken of as having contained "the first efforts of those writers

who could fairly lay claim to be the pioneers of French Canadian literature." Of the other two, Mr. Bourinot remarks that they "gave a new impulse to native talent," and that "those who wish to study the productions of the early days of French Canadian literature will find much interest and profit in the pages of these characteristic publications." In later times *La Revue Canadienne, La Revue de Montréal,* and—in English—the *New Dominion Monthly* have contained contributions from some of the leading writers of our country.

In science, the *Canadian Journal,* published at Toronto, and the *Canadian Naturalist,* published at Montreal, have in their day done good work in their special fields. There are well-conducted legal and medical periodicals in all the older Provinces. There are doubtless other publications which have escaped the writer's notice, but the object of the present chapter is rather to give an idea of the general intellectual activity of the Canadian people than to furnish a complete list of any particular department of literature. One work, however, which is properly to be classed among periodical publications—the *Dominion Annual Register*—is specially deserving of mention. It was projected about five years ago by Mr. Morgan, whose labours in other fields have already been referred to. Three volumes of this exceedingly valuable compend have already appeared, and it is gratifying to know that the editor has met with sufficient encouragement to justify the hope that its publication will be continuous and permanent. The *Canadian Parliamentary Companion,* founded in 1862, and issued annually ever since, is another useful work of reference which we owe to the enterprise of Mr. Morgan, though it has of late years passed into other hands.

In nothing has our intellectual progress been more signally displayed than in our newspapers. When the Union came into operation in 1841 the really influential Canadian organs of public opinion might almost have been numbered on the fingers of one hand. In



THE HON. WILFRED LAURIER.

Upper Canada the representative political papers were the *Patriot*, the *British Colonist* and the *Examiner*, all published in Toronto. The first-named was the leading organ of the ultra-Tory party, and had originally been established at Kingston by Thomas Dalton, a vigorous writer of strongly-pronounced political views. The paper was removed to York towards the end of 1832, and was thenceforward conducted by Mr. Dalton until his death in 1840. Subsequently it was at different times edited by Mr. Scott Burn, Dr. O'Brien and the present Chief Justice Hagarty. In 1848 it passed into the hands of Samuel Thompson, by whom it was finally disposed of to James Beaty, who amalgamated it with the *Leader*. The *Colonist* was long the chief organ of moderate Conservatism in Upper Canada, and was conducted by Hugh Scobie, who was in his day a man of considerable influence and intellectual vigour. The *Colonist* had a long and tolerably prosperous career, and survived the advent of the Union by nearly twenty years. Like the *Patriot*, it ultimately passed into Mr. Beaty's hands, after which it was amalgamated with or absorbed by the *Leader*. The *Examiner*, founded by Mr. Hincks in 1838, as the advocate of Responsible Government, eventually became the chief organ of the Reform party. When its editor and proprietor accepted office as Inspector-General in the Government as reconstructed under Sir Charles Bagot, in 1842, the paper passed into other hands,* but it continued to be the chief advocate of Reform interests until the founding of the *Globe* in 1844. From that time forward its influence perceptibly waned, though it continued to be published, and, as has already been seen,† survived long enough to become the mouthpiece of the Clear Grit party. The *Christian Guardian* should also be referred to here, as, though it was ostensibly merely the organ of a religious body, it took a very decided stand on

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 220. † *Ante*, Vol. II., p. 187.

various public questions of the time, and exerted a wide and potent influence. It was founded at York (Toronto) in 1829, in the interests of Canadian Methodism. Under the editorship of Egerton Ryerson and Franklin Metcalfe it became a powerful exponent of Methodist opinion, and was recognized throughout Upper Canada as an intellectual force. The influential position gained thus early in its career has been steadily maintained down to the present day. Its politics were, and have always been, moderate Liberal. The present editor, Dr. Dewart, is known as a forcible writer, and as a man of wide knowledge and sympathies.

The *Gazette* and the *Herald* of Montreal shared with the *Gazette* and the *Mercury* of Quebec a practical monopoly of political influence among the English-speaking population of Lower Canada at the time of the Union. The Montreal *Gazette*, originally founded more than a century ago, has undergone many changes of ownership, but it still flourishes in all the vigour of a lusty maturity. It is the Conservative organ of the Province of Quebec, but is read by persons of all shades of opinion, and is notable for the force and literary style of its editorial articles. Mr. Thomas White, who is prominently identified with its editorship, and who has greatly contributed to the present success of the paper as a business enterprise, has long been well known in the political and journalistic world of Canada. The literary editor, Mr. John Reade, is known not only as a high authority on matters specially appertaining to his department, but as a cultivated and scholarly man, who has written some of the most charming verses in our Canadian literature. The Montreal *Herald* is the chief organ of the English-speaking Liberals of the Province. It was founded during the first decade of the present century, and has ever since been a recognized power. It enjoys a specially high reputation for the accuracy of its commercial news, and is read by leading merchants all over the country. The Quebec *Gazette*, the earliest newspaper published in Canada, has already

been referred to in connection with the career of the Hon. John Neilson,* who continued to contribute to its columns down to the very eve of his death in 1848.† It survived down to a comparatively recent period. The Quebec *Mercury*, founded in 1805 as the mouthpiece of the British party and high-Toryism, is still published, though shorn of its once formidable influence and pretensions.

The French Canadians had but one really influential paper in 1841. This was *Le Canadien*. *La Minerve* had been established at Montreal by Mr. A. N. Morin in 1826; but it had been suppressed during the rebellion, and did not again appear until about a year subsequent to the Union. It is still published, and numbers among its contributors some of the most scholarly French Canadian journalists in the land. It represents the *Bleu* or Conservative element in the Provincial politics of Quebec, as also does *Le Canadien*, founded at Quebec in 1806, in opposition to British interests.‡ Scarcely had the Union been established ere Mr. Cauchon founded the *Journal de Québec*,§ which still enjoys a considerable local circulation.

In 1844 Mr. Hincks established the *Pilot* at Montreal as the Lower Canadian organ of the Reform party.‖ It enjoyed a fair measure of success while it remained in his hands, but in later times it languished and died. The circumstances under which the Toronto *Globe* came to be established have been told at length in the preceding narrative.¶ That well-known journal has ever since been the most important political organ in Canada, and it still wields an influence which no public man can afford to despise. Its editor, Mr. John Gordon Brown, though he has never entered Parliamentary life, is almost as widely known in the Dominion as was his elder brother. His very exceptional journalistic ability has been dis-

* *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 91-93.
† *Ante*, Vol. II., pp. 116, 117.
‡ *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 20, 93, 94.
§ *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 388.
‖ *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 380.
¶ *Ante*, Vol. I., pp. 362-367.

played upon the *Globe* for more than thirty years, and has materially contributed to maintain that journal in the high rank which it achieved at an early period of its career. The journalistic labours of Ogle R. Gowan have also been indicated on a former page;* as likewise have those of William McDougall, first on the *Examiner* and the *North American*,† and afterwards on the *Globe*. *L'Avenir*‡ founded in 1848 as the chief organ of the French Canadian *Rouges* of Lower Canada, was conducted with almost fierce enthusiasm by its editor, J. B. E. Dorion, and, while it lasted, was the champion of probably the most "advanced" platform ever advocated by a Canadian newspaper. It was indeed too advanced for its pecuniary success, and its lease of life was short. The Toronto *Leader*, founded by James Beaty in 1852,§ was edited at different periods of its existence by Charles Lindsey, George Sheppard, and the late Charles Belford. It was the exponent of Conservative principles, and was for many years conducted with much vigour. Subsequent to Confederation its stature grew perceptibly less, and its influence steadily dwindled until 1878, when it quietly passed away. Various other journals, unnecessary to be specified, have undergone similar mutations of fortune. They have lived their more or less brief lives, and have ceased to be. A number of comparatively modern enterprises have on the other hand won very decided journalistic successes. Conspicuous among them is the Liberal-Conservative organ *par excellence*—the *Mail*—established at Toronto in 1872. It at once took the place which it has ever since maintained as one of the foremost journals of the Dominion. Under its first editor, Mr. T. C. Patteson, it attained a circulation and influence commensurate with the political interests represented by it, and the eminence then achieved has never been lost. Like its Liberal-Conservative contemporary in Montreal, it is specially noticeable for

* *Ante*, Vol. I., p. 383.
† *Ante*, Vol. II., pp. 189, 190, 349.
‡ *Ante*, Vol. II., pp. 190, 191.
§ *Ante*, Vol. II., p. 295.

the culture and intellectual vigour of its editorial articles. The present incumbent of the editorial chair, Mr. Martin J. Griffin, is known beyond the fields of journalism as a valued contributor to the magazine literature of the day.*

The remarkable growth of the newspaper press of Canada is effectually proved by the fact that at the present day there is not an important city or town in the land but can boast of at least one well-written and ably-conducted journal. In addition to those already mentioned, Toronto has its *Telegram* and its *World;* Montreal its *Witness,* its *Star* and its *Post* in English, and *Le Monde, Le Courrier* and *La Patrie* in French. Quebec has its *Chronicle* in English, and *L'Evenement* and *L'Electeur* in French; Ottawa its *Free Press* and its *Citizen;* Hamilton its *Spectator* and its *Times;* Kingston its *News* and its *Whig;* London its *Free Press* and its *Advertiser.* The list might be extended indefinitely, but no good purpose would be served by simple enumeration. In the Maritime Provinces journalism received a great impetus from Confederation. The chief labours of Mr. Howe and Mr. Annand belong to an earlier period, but they have found legitimate successors in the leading journalists of Halifax, Fredericton and St. John. Manitoba journalism has flourished apace since the days of the *Nor'-Wester,* and the daily papers of Winnipeg will now bear comparison with those of Toronto and Montreal. British Columbia has at least two papers of character and influence; and the day is evidently not far distant when the newly-organized territories in the North-West will be able to boast of their daily journals.

The drawbacks which have hitherto frustrated all attempts to permanently establish a high-class monthly magazine in Canada have also attended upon all efforts at maintaining a weekly newspaper of a similar character. The most notable attempts in that

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* *Ante,* p. 581.

direction have been the *Nation* and the *Canadian Spectator.* The former, established ten years ago under the auspices of the "Canada First" party, was conducted with a degree of ability that richly deserved success; but it failed to realize the full hopes of its projectors, and after being supported by private contributions for about four years the publication ceased. The *Spectator* was a similar honourable attempt to found an independent weekly periodical at Montreal. Its existence also extended over about four years, and the requiem was sung over its grave no longer ago than last summer. An illustrated paper of less literary pretence —the *Canadian Illustrated News*—published at Montreal, has achieved a certain measure of success, and is now in its thirteenth year of publication.

We have at different times had a great variety of humorous periodicals, but it was reserved for a clever caricaturist of the present day to furnish us with a satirical sheet which possesses in itself all the seeds of a long and vigorous life. *Grip,* the first number of which appeared on the 24th of May, 1873, has not only well deserved success, but has fully commanded it, and has become a recognized presence in society and politics. As it has entered upon its twentieth volume, it may be regarded as having safely passed the experimental stage. Its founder, Mr. J. W. Bengough, has exhibited a versatility of genius which assuredly would have ensured success for him anywhere in his own particular walk. Turn over page after page of the nineteen suggestive volumes which we owe in great measure to his own honourable industry, and you will find an abundance of sharp, pungent and most effective satire, both of pen and pencil. You will find a fund of healthful, wholesome amusement in the burlesque presentations of our leading politicians, and of the current events of the time. But you will search in vain for anything malicious, anything vulgar, anything low or impure. The most sensitive public man could hardly take umbrage at seeing himself depicted by the truly

genial pencil of *Grip*. The conspicuous weaknesses of individuals are exhibited in a droll and amusing light, but everything is presented

"In a manner so kindly, you doubt if the toes
That are trodden upon are your own or your foes'."

The humour is always *good* humour. If it lacks some of the higher qualities of *Punch*, it is farther still removed from the coarse brutality which characterizes not a few of the satiric papers that are imported every week from the United States.

Seven years have elapsed since the President of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec thus wrote in the pages of the *Canadian Monthly:* "In Canada no man could live on the money product of other literary work than that of the newspaper press. A colonial publisher knows his own interest too well to give anything worth while for a manuscript which, if he publish it, will be likely not to meet with sale enough to cover cost of printing."* As regards the former of these statements, it could not truthfully be made at the present day. As regards the second, colonial publishers are not different from other publishers in that respect. Certainly no wise publisher, colonial or other, would pay anything for manuscript matter which could not profitably be put in type and printed. But it by no means follows that a worthless manuscript and a Canadian author's manuscript are convertible terms. When Horace Greeley was asked whether he considered woman as the equal of man, he dryly replied: "That depends on who the woman is, and who the man is." The value of a manuscript depends, not upon the nationality of the writer, but upon his capacity. If a Canadian author has anything to say that the world wishes to hear, and that is in itself worthy of being heard, he will certainly not find himself handicapped by the mere fact that he is a Canadian. On the other

* "The Intellectual Progress of Canada," by James Douglas, Jr., in the *Canadian Monthly* for June, 1875.

hand, if he has really nothing of value to say, he has no right to expect to be heard with favour by his compatriots merely *because* he is a Canadian. Nor should the publisher be saddled with the burden sought to be imposed upon him in the above extract. It is not the publisher's fault if the Canadian author's writings have no market-value. "When I see members of my congregation asleep in their pews," said Henry Ward Beecher, "I don't ask a man to go and wake them up, but I send for a man to come and wake *me* up." If the Canadian author cannot find an appreciative audience, let him acknowledge that the fault lies with himself, and not with the public. Let him produce a really meritorious work, and the publisher will without difficulty be found. In Canada, as elsewhere, literary merit finds its level.

There is one danger—not a very serious one, but still a danger—against which it becomes every Canadian man of letters to be on his guard. There is a decided propensity to envy and detraction in certain literary circles in this country. This is of neither wholesome nor hopeful augury. "It is a sign of a dry age," says a contemporary English writer,* "when the principal authors of a country look askance on one another. . . . A little more acquaintance with the history of literature might have shown them how strong the sentiment of comradeship has been in every age of real intellectual vitality." In a new country like our own, every literary man that achieves a success achieves it not for himself alone, but for all his professional brethren. He deserves good at their hands, and not evil. If there is any profession on earth that should inspire the members of it with a fraternal feeling towards each other, it is that of authorship. That a great deal of such fraternal feeling exists among our own writers is indisputable. In view of the most kindly and generous reception which has been accorded to these pages by the Canadian press, the writer ought to be the last to ignore the

* See *Gray* (English Men of Letters Series), by Edmund W. Gosse.

superabundant weight of testimony on this point. But it is also true that there is a considerable leaven of uncharitableness, and it is meet that all authors who respect themselves and their profession should unite in frowning down this tainted residuum of incapacity. No man who is jealous of his brother is worthy of a place in the glorious Guild of Literature—a Guild which is before all things a republic, wherein success is the primary criterion of merit.



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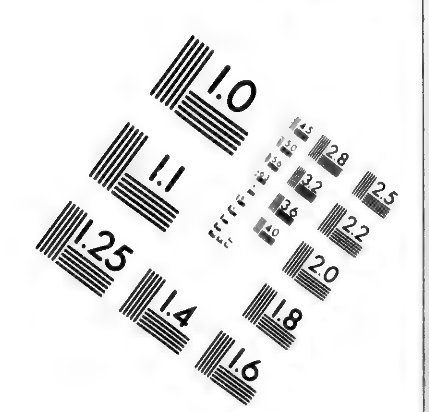
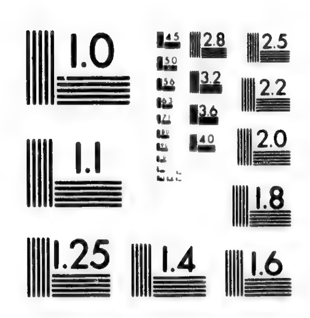
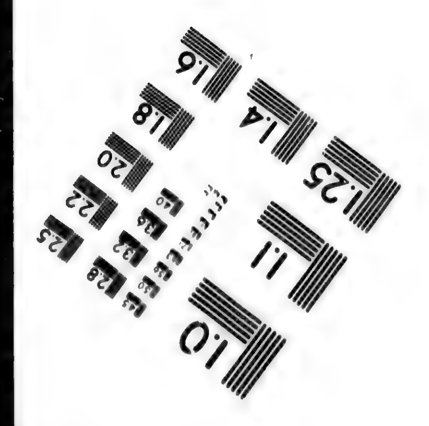
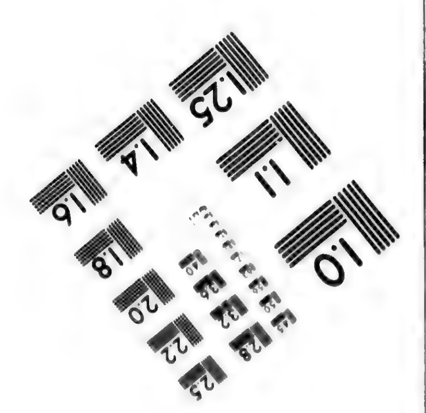
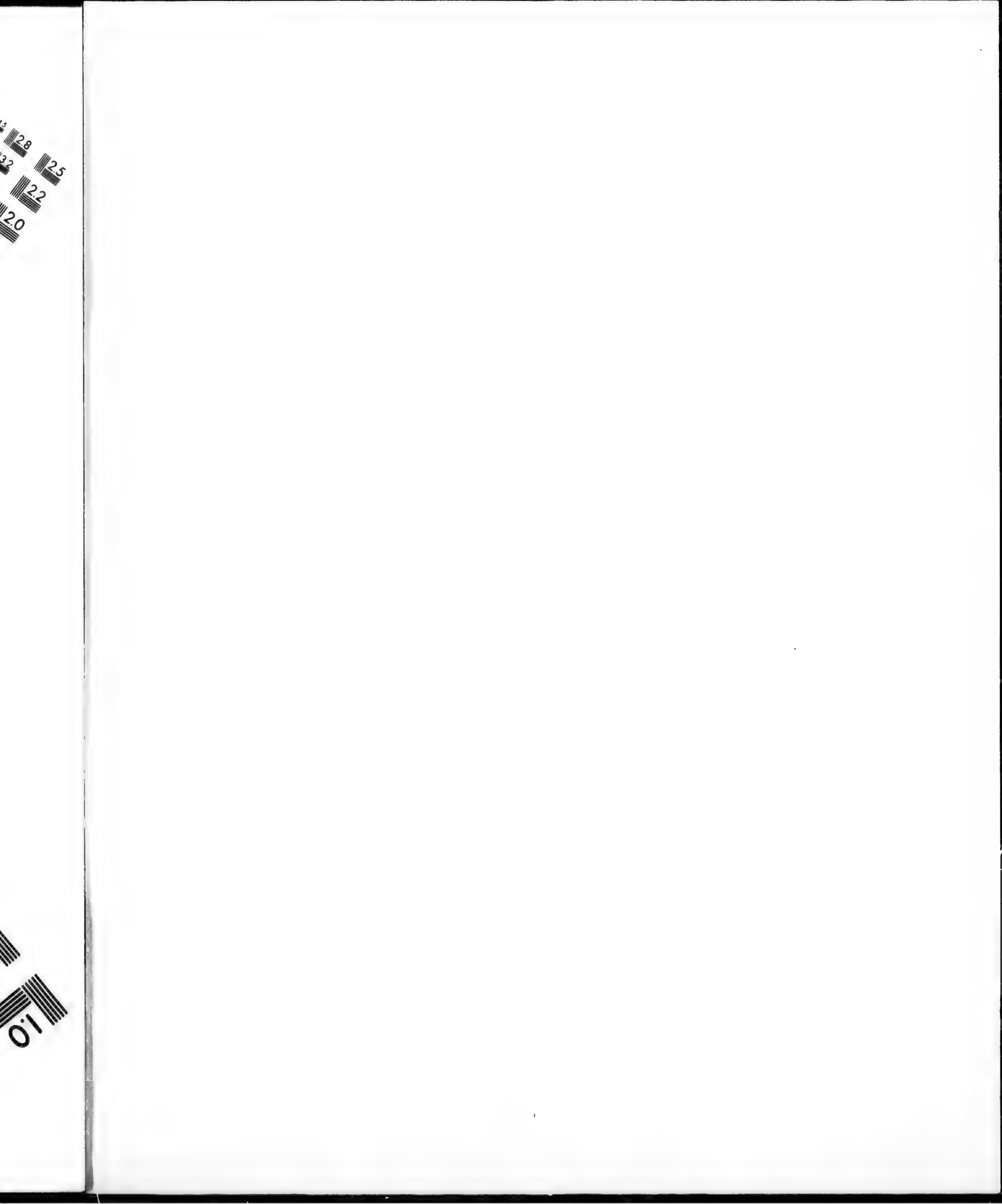


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